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TRANSPLANTED TRUTHS FROM EPHESIANS

A.S. HOBART

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Palm Sunday
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Mary Colgate
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TRANSPLANTED TRUTHS

TRANSPLANTED TRUTHS

Or, Expositions of Great Texts in Ephesians

BY
ALVAH SABIN HOBART, D. D.
Professor of New Testament Interpretation in Crozer Theological Seminary. Author of "Tillage of the Heart," "Our Silent Partner," "Seed Thoughts for Right Living"

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PREFACE

THE Scripture is an ancient book. From some standpoints it might be said to be out of fashion. But it has a vitality about it that refuses to be put aside. This is because it contains great, eternal truths and principles that are like perennial plants, that may be transplanted into new soil or removed to new climate and still bear their flowers and shed their native perfume.

The truths of the New Testament, when adapted to modern life, do for people just what they did for those to whom they were at first written. All that is necessary is to clothe the ideas in our phrase and apply them to our circumstances, and lo! the old songs of praise and the ancient peace of heart reappear. These sermons are attempts thus to transplant the ideas that gladdened the heart of Paul and of his Ephesian brethren.

THE AUTHOR.

CROZER SEMINARY, December, 1914.

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INTRODUCTION

The Essentials of Exposition

In the study of Scripture it is important to have some general knowledge of the situation under which the various books were written, and the main purpose the writer had in his writing.

It is especially necessary to avoid taking words and sentences out of their connection.

It is equally important to give each writer his own use of words. Then, as now, individuals flavored their words with their own conceptions. It would be poor interpretation to take Jesus' word "righteousness," in Matthew 6:1, to mean the same thing that Paul meant in Romans 3 : 5, or Philippians 3:9, when he used the same word.

When the actual ideas and conceptions of the writer have been fairly well ascertained, there remains for the teacher or the preacher the task of transposing them into modern forms of speech so that the expositions will not themselves need an expositor to make them effective.

And when the Scripture idea has been expressed in modern phrases, there remains the need of showing the practical connection with our own daily life.

For we meet a very common difficulty in keeping the value of Scripture at par. Just as, when some financial "investigation" has been started, the price of a stock falls, so, owing to some modern investigation of the Scriptures, many people hold them in less esteem and study them with less zeal, thinking they may not be always relied upon.

It would be useless to complain at this depreciation of authority. It is as inevitable as the tides of the ocean. Every man under such conditions must come to see the value or he will not feel the authority. He must see how the Scripture teaching touches his own life wisely and helpfully, or he will neither care for its study nor listen to its exposition. What cannot be verified in experience, and does not when verified bring any good, will not—and it does not matter if it does not—interest men.

The Scriptures as a whole are adopted as an authority not because of any outside testimony to their inspiration. Some parts of the Scriptures are properly so accepted; but in the main their authority is like that of the multiplication table, or the fundamental rules of hygiene—they "work well" and "fit life to a T." This volume is a contribution to an experiential estimate of Ephesians.

When we meet a person for the first time we take in at a glance some of his general features; afterward his mental, moral, and spiritual characteristics. In these swift and almost unconscious studies there is a sifting out of things common to all men, and an

estimate of what we may call the individual marks—the looks, tones, and view-point peculiar to him. It is these dissimilarities, these margins of difference from others, that make people interesting or helpful to us. We value them by the cargo of individualities they bring.

The processes by which we become acquainted with literary writings are quite similar to those by which we become acquainted with people. There is a general idea at first, then grasp of the literary form, then a study of the peculiar views of the author which underlie and predetermine his expressions.

The study of the Bible proceeds in a similar way. Each book has its general purpose and its individuality. Its style and argument are determined by the purpose and the personality of the author. If these are difficult to discover, still the effort must be made, or the flavor of the book will be lost, and with it a large part of its value in life be unused.

The Author of this Letter

It comes to us as the letter of "Paul an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God," and to that fatherhood the letter has been ascribed by the traditions of the church. There are, however, some very inquiring—not to say hypercritical—writers who try to make the writing out to be a bastard epistle which its father for some reason was unwilling to own, but

to which some kindly churchmen gave a name and a family. But for ourselves, we shall be as well off, and feel better off, to take it as it has been called by tradition, and as it claims for itself to be, a letter from Paul, leaving the burden of finding some other authorship to those who desire to find it.[1]

To Whom Addressed

It comes to us directed to the "saints in Ephesus and to the faithful in Christ Jesus." There is a slight cloud resting upon its title. In some of the old manuscripts the words "in Ephesus" are not found; and so its proper owners are not certainly identified as those living in Ephesus. But the next clause has no uncertainty. It says, "the faithful in Christ Jesus." That is broad enough to include us all.

The variety in the manuscripts grew naturally out of the character of the letter. Its contents are so suitable for any church in any generation that those who desired to use it elsewhere than at Ephesus were justified in leaving out that special designation, and thus making it general.

But we must unwind this word "saints" from its ecclesiastical cerements, as the friends of Lazarus loosed him and let him go from the realm of the grave to the realm of the living. The Roman

[1] See "The Pauline Letters," by Robert Scott, for the non-Pauline authorship.

Catholic Encyclopedia gives a good account of the ecclesiastical saint. He must have been sinless, and a miracle-worker, and have been dead a long time. The "saint" of the New Testament is a person who, having heard of the Lord Jesus, has deliberately chosen to live his life in trustful obedience to him. He is a living, not a dead man. Such persons are at once enrolled, while living and still imperfect in holiness, in the list of "saints," and have a part in this letter.

General Characteristics of the Letter

It is fundamentally religious, and speaks only of "spiritual" matters. There were struggles for wealth there, and fightings to "keep the wolf from the door." There were civil enormities and political tyrannies that needed reformation. There were matters of discipline in the church. There were heresies, and more or less true philosophies. But all these matters were ignored except as they were affected by the spiritual teachings Paul gave. He was not a reformer, nor a civil agitator except by indirection.

Spiritual in Paul's use does not mean other-worldly. It means that which has to do with a man's spirit here or anywhere. It does not concern the coat a man wears, nor the food he eats, nor the house he lives in; but it is concerned with the man who wears the coat and eats the food and

occupies the house. Paul knew better than most of us that the spirit controls the comfort of men very largely. A new house does not make a new man, nor does a clean shirt give a man a clean heart, but a clean heart will seek a clean shirt and a clean body. Paul did not, as some say, "deflect" the gospel, but he did "divert" men's thought from that consideration of the material side of life which seems, in the minds of the first three Gospels, to have somewhat overshadowed the consideration of the spiritual side. But it was not because he belittled earthly matters, but because he saw with a true insight that the permanent sources of improvement in sociological conditions are to be found in the recognition of the "spiritual blessings" of which he writes and in the redemption first of the individual. If we study the last part of the letter we shall see that he does not at all neglect the social relations, nor the social duties of people. He did not even mark out the path that men's minds must travel, as the gospel he preached would begin to remake society. He frankly said in his letter to the Corinthians that he only "laid a foundation." The adjustment of life to the new relations of the Christian family would be made later as occasion and opportunity arrived. "But let every man take heed how he builds." Only he must build on the Christian foundation. If in our imagination we should build a community in which Paul's suggestions and practical ideas about brotherliness were

consistently carried out to their full application, we should have a community identical in all its essentials of justice and sympathy with the one that the critics of Paul would ascribe to Jesus only. Paul went deep, and laid good foundations. He was religious and spiritual all the way through his letters. But he was never unsociological. With him, as with Wesley, "Christianity is a social religion."

This letter is timeless. Paul deals with continuous things. No blessing mentioned by him was for them and not for us, and no word of promise to us which was not for them. No "better covenant," no types and shadows, no dispensation in which they had no share. Every honor, every joy, every duty, every hope for them is just as real and fresh and inspiring for us. He says, "You are being built upon the foundation." The mystery of Christ is "now revealed." My work is "to make all men see." "Ye were darkness, but now ye are light."

And all this is "in Christ." To seek the blessings of which he writes outside of that glorious one would be to preannounce a failure. Paul was not a mere moral reformer, he was a Christian preacher. He was not preaching merely a new morality or a new code of morals. He had gone through all the unsatisfactoriness of those things as he has told us in the seventh of Romans. The experiences that he and his brethren in Ephesus and in Galatia had passed through had come to

them in no other way than by faith in Jesus;[2] and therefore Paul could not be anything else than a preacher of Christ Jesus. In his letter to the Corinthians he said: "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). He would not have denied that there are good things in good morals and philosophy, just as there are good uses for feet and hands. But the usefulness is conditioned on subordination to a head. Christ to his people is "head over all" (Eph. 1:22). To follow a system of morals having Christ as its ideal and inspiration is salvation; but a system of morals without him fails for want of definiteness and of helpful power. A philosophy of life with Christian ideals as the basis is good, but without him it gives the soul nothing but what Hume called an "inexpressible loneliness."

It is universal. There is nothing there which is not open to the whole world on the same conditions. Paul speaks about Christian things, but Christ in his estimate is no local Lord, nor some enlarged man that has been "deified" by men, nor "the greatest man, but one having the limitations of humanity." To him Christ is the one around whom it is the plan of God to gather together in one all things in heaven and in earth. (1 : 10.) When

[2] "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or the hearing of faith?" (Gal. 3 : 1-9.) "Having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you." (Eph. 1 : 15.) "By grace have ye been saved." (Eph. 2 : 5.)

this is to be fully accomplished may not be known to us, but from Paul's view-point the sweep of God's mercy is so wide that somehow, in some way, the work and care of Jesus touches for good all things in heaven and in earth. The whole creation groaneth, waiting for the full manifestation of the sons of God. (Rom. 8:20-23.) We at times hear men say: "This religion is not for me, it is for those that have a special aptitude for it"; others say: "This is for certain races, and is not fitted for other races"; but Paul says that all men and all creatures have something in Christ, and Christ has something in all men and all creatures.

The Danger and the Method of Defense

Ephesus was a city in the west part of Asia Minor, and in Paul's time was an important city. The people of that region had been taught that a wooden image of Diana had once fallen from heaven, and a temple had been built for it; and therefore Diana was mightily pleased with the city and country of Ephesus. The temple at that time was one of the "seven wonders of the world." A great temple had been built five hundred years before Paul's time. That had been burned by one Herostratus, who "fired the Ephesian dome" to make himself famous. But a new one, built three hundred and fifty years before Paul's day, stood in its place. It was a thing of beauty and riches. One

hundred and twenty-seven columns entered into its construction, each one of which is said to have been contributed by one of the princes of Asia. Crœsus of Lydia, the richest man of the ancient world, was one of the large contributors to its cost. It was the depository of rare paintings and statuary. And, as temples were sacred places, it became a sort of safety vault for the jewels and money of the rich. Festivals were held there to which the people of the surrounding country came with their friends and families, bringing gifts to the priests and taking relics back as souvenirs. Thus the business of the city depended largely on the worship of Diana. Luke, in Acts (19:23-28), tells us that the city was greatly disturbed at one time by the success of Paul's preaching. He was shutting up the image factories as great revivals shut up the saloons in our day. The zeal of the citizens for Diana contained the reverence of the Jew for Jerusalem, the hankering of the aristocratic for London, the love for Paris by the devotees of pleasure, and the desire for New York by the money-seeker, all combined in one great enthusiasm. There had once been a philosophic community there, but in Paul's time the city was superstitious and licentious. Vile practices were associated with the temple worship, and the general morals of the place were low.[8]

[8] See Farrar, "Life of Paul," Chap. 31; or Conybeare and Howson, "Life and Epistles of Paul"; or Ramsay, "Saint Paul the Traveler and Roman Citizen."

In the midst of these surroundings a few Christians were trying to live their lives in devotion and trust to another God, who had no temple there, whose public worship furnished no financial gain for the worshipers and had no social or fashionable influence to bolster it. They were not only laughed at for worshiping a crucified criminal, but they were persecuted by the community and deserted by their friends for their seeming folly and madness.

Paul had led these people to Christ. And he was no traveling gospeler who, when he had counted the converts for advertising purposes and received the collection, moved on to new harvest fields. In every city where he preached he left a part of his heart, and took the affections of some of the people with him. Being anxious for their welfare he writes this letter. In it he does not ridicule the Diana religion. Probably we should have told them that they were a lot of foolish, deluded people to believe in an old chunk of rotten wood; that their religion had the silliest superstition behind it, and had nothing to offer to a soul hungry for the favor of God. All that would have been true. But Paul does not say a word in contempt of Diana. He seems to think that if he can tell them the facts about the "riches of God in Christ Jesus," they will have a permanent reason for staying faithful. His method commends itself to us very heartily. Men are not permanently changed in conduct or

faith until they see the advantages of a change. Therefore Paul, confident that if they see the case clearly they will have a permanent motive to "walk worthy of their calling," shows them what they have "in Christ."

CHAPTER I

THE CHRISTIAN'S INHERITANCE

"Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love; having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved; in whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, making known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him. . . In whom also we were made an heritage, . . in whom ye also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation,—in whom having also believed, ye were sealed with that spirit of promise . . . unto the praise of his glory."—Eph. 1 : 4-14.

WE are to consider the specific blessings springing out of God's grace.

First, "*He chose us in him, that we should be holy and without blame before him.*" Look at the framework of that sentence a moment. "He," that is, God, "chose us . . . that we should be holy."

If that means anything, it means that the God of heaven is interested in all our efforts to be good

men and women. The endeavors we make to put away all smallness and meanness, to rise up into a high, clean, honest air, and live there, so that we can look men in the face with open eyes and frank countenance—the daily effort to live with a conscience void of offense—how many-sided the battle is!—in it all God is a prime mover. Paul tells us—what we all believe but often forget—that the heavenly Father has chosen us and brought us into Christ on purpose to bring about the fulfilment of those very desires—"Chose us in him *to be holy and without blemish.*"

Our forces for righteousness then are not limited to our own powers. He is a "silent partner" in our endeavor.

This is not mere theory. Every man knows that when we search our hearts to find the root and fountain of our endeavors to be good we find that something in us which is not of us began the work. Religious life is our response to a call within us.

We cannot trace it to its source. But, as when our thought follows back a great river up through the valleys, and into the creeks and rivulets, until it ends in an area of moist land, which somehow finds its outlet for surplus moisture through the springs and streams, so this purpose to be holy has its origin and supply in a wide extent of influences that come from God, working in us to will and to do his good pleasure. And the conviction that God not only wants us to be holy, but that he

is working with us to be so is a constant source of strength and courage.

Secondly, "*He predestinated us unto the adoption of children.*"

A close look at this shows that what is printed second was really first. "What is first in intention is last in execution." Having *predestinated* us he *chose* us.

The predestination was first. How we stumble over that word "predestinate"! The memories of discussions, even of wars and lifelong hostilities, come like doves to their windows. One is almost afraid to call attention to the word lest he cannot succeed, after once having opened the flood of memories, in getting the mind back to the truth in the passage. We shall find relief from all the trouble if we note and hold exactly to what is said. Predestinated to what? He does not say to *salvation.* Much less does he say to *condemnation,* but to be "children of God."

It will not be considered irreverent if we personify the thoughts of our heavenly Father in the precreation days. He sees that some people will in the face of difficulty and temptation become followers of his Son, and his thought is, What shall be done with them? One thought says: "Let them be made to control the world; give them the dominion of sea and land, make them kings and priests for the world." But that is not enough to satisfy the Father's heart. Another thought says: "Let

them be made to live forever. Give them to eat again of the tree of life, make them physically conquerors over all disease." But the Father says: "No, that is not sufficient; it would tie them to earth." Another says, "Make them like unto the angels of heaven." But he says, "No, I desire something better than that." And when all have exhausted their best wishes, the Father says: "I will make them my children. Adopt them as sons." As Paul afterward says, we are to receive the "adoption as sons," and have the "spirit of adoption." That is, we are to be like children of God and feel like his sons, not like his servants. That word "children" we must take in the sense that it had in New Testament times—*likeness to God in character*. We say to a boy, "You are your father's boy," because he is like his father. A more common expression tells the same story, "A chip out of the old block." That is the idea in "children of God." Peter tells the same story when he says we are made "partakers of the divine nature." Now what is here declared is not that God predestinated this man and that woman to be saved, but that the saved should be like himself in character and in holiness. Not *who* are to be saved, but *unto what* they are to be saved. We were made in the image of his being, and are to be conformed to his character. It was the divine purpose to people heaven with beings in his own image, having likeness to his character. That is what was predetermined.

Then the question of *how* came up for consideration; and in the wisdom of God it was decided that Christ should come into the world and show the way of life. Men should become his followers, and thus following him come into the likeness of God, which was the ultimate aim of it all. To the "adoption of children." Not creatures, not servants, not subjects of a king—these words are all too small to tell the whole truth; they have no room for love and trust and eternal fellowship—but "Father" and "son"; these have a meaning that approaches the truth. "Adoption of sons!" It seems to me that if we dwell upon that we shall see that it involves all the rest. But it is rolled up very close. It needs opening and spreading out in detail to make its fulness to be clearly seen.

Thirdly, "*we have redemption.*" There has been much discussion about redemption. This metaphor has been conscripted into service for the defense of a certain theory of the atonement. But all that is foreign to Paul's thought here. He defines his own word by saying as an explanatory phrase, "The forgiveness of our trespasses." That makes it read, as our third blessing, "*We have received the forgiveness of our trespasses.*"

Up to this place in the inventory the blessings are spoken of simply as having been provided for us. Now they are regarded as already come into our possession. We begin not simply to hope, but to have. The old-fashioned way of stating it was,

"Justification is the great gospel blessing." The old-fashioned question of the convert was, "Have you made your peace with God?" That question has partly gone out of fashion. It will come in again because it seeks a great truth. As soon as the heart becomes really alive to its sinfulness and to the beauty of holiness, it finds the sense of doing wrong and of feeling wrong, and of loving wrong even when we do not do it, is a high barrier between us and our God. No man wants to praise or pray when he does not feel forgiven. Somehow the fact of our disturbed relations with God is troublesome. We may be unwilling to admit it to others, but when we are alone we do not look up. Our countenance, like Cain's, is fallen. Before we can make any progress in goodness or have any real peace, we must get an assurance that we are right with God. Jesus knew what he was about when he pictured the returning sinner under the figure of the prodigal son. He did not make him return in the night, and sneak around to the quarters of the servants and tell them not to tell his father. We might have told it that way. We could have made him say to his father's head servant: "I've had enough of the world. Let me have some work on the old homestead. Give me what you please for wages. I am half dead with hunger. But don't tell the old man. If you can get word to mother, do it, and she will keep mum. When I have got cleaned up and begin to look like my old self

again, then we will see the old gent, but not now." Well, if we were disposed to tell it that way it would show how little we know about human hearts. Do you remember the story of Absalom? (2 Samuel 14.) He was permitted to come back from Egypt and not see his father. But he could not stand it long. He set fire to his father's grain to obtain admission to his presence. Jesus makes the prodigal say: "I will go to my father, and I will say to him, I have sinned." No peace was for him until the relations with his father were restored. All the preparatory experiences bore fruit when his father fell on his neck and kissed him. He then "received redemption, even the forgiveness of sins." So now the Christian sings:

> Happy day, happy day,
> When Jesus washed my sins away.

Strip it of all poetry, come down to the coldest and most careful statement, and a sense of the forgiveness of sin is the first and most needed, as it is the most inclusive of all blessings. And that is what we are said to have received. It seems to me that many believers in Christ lack a clear sense of the value of this blessing. The doctrine of "assurance" has fallen into disrepute; but there is a most blessed treasure waiting for the man that does not have a sense of forgiveness. And if he has it, what blessing is there which is not included in this? It implies that we are now on such terms with our Father

that he can do for us what his heart prompts. Before this we stood in our own light; we hindered his grace; now the way is open, and all good is free to come as fast as we are able to take it.

Fourthly, *we are made his confidants.* "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will." This recalls the words of Jesus to his twelve disciples: "No longer do I call you servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from my Father I have made known unto you" (John 15:15). The argument is that we are shown to be friends by the fact that we are taken into confidence. That is Paul's thought here. God is said to have made known unto us the mystery of his will concerning mankind. This is a truth that is likely to stumble us. It seems altogether an excess of pious conceit to say or to think that the Creator has communicated anything to us except what we can gather from the created world. It involves the whole question whether any real revelation has been, or will be, made to us. This is not the place to discuss that great question. It certainly is an important question. But Paul assumes that a revelation has been made to us in Christ Jesus. All the New Testament has the same assumption. (And we are not now defending the New Testament. We are studying it to see what it teaches us.) And I think that many Christians feel themselves more in the dark than they need to. It is not an in-

frequent thing to hear people speak of life as a "journey through an unexplored wilderness" and of death as "a leap in the dark." But Paul does not so consider it. And we, if we credit his teachings, need not so consider it.

Suppose we should forget everything we have learned out of the teachings of Jesus, what should we know about the origin or nature of our own souls? What about the future? Are we to live or not, when we have "shuffled off this mortal coil"? Is wickedness to trouble us always? Will death forever threaten us, and smother our most alluring plans and ambitions? What will be the outcome of human history? Are there any definite plans and principles that we may follow with assurance that they lead to peace and life? If, I say, we were to lose all that the teachings of Jesus tell us about these matters we should be plunged at once into the chill of an unrelieved agnosticism, or the dead, hopeless condition of fatalism.

But, while much is left unrevealed, we have given to us the repeated assurances of an attainable immortality of peace and usefulness. We are given principles of conduct that are safe and already tried and proved. We are assured that this life is destined to culminate in a kingdom of God on earth as obedient and as pure as the kingdom in heaven. And we are assured that God will "gather together in one all things in Christ," and that the various branches of the human family

will be united in one Christ-centered community, controlled by the spirit of brotherhood. And at some time this "mortal will put on immortality," and with bodies and souls transformed into the image of Jesus, will live and serve in peace and joy.

It is therefore the privilege of the Christian not to live in the shadows. He may not think that an unfriendly power controls even this life. He is taught that all things work together for good to them that love God, and that some time we shall be transferred into conditions that are beyond our present power to realize.

It will be a great comfort for us all to think much of this part of our inheritance. It will banish the pessimism that at times makes us wretched, and will give us great sense of triumph over fear of the so-called and miscalled "king of terrors." It will put into our mouths Paul's triumphant outburst: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15:56.)

Fifthly, *we are taken as his heritage.* We notice the change in translation. The old reads, "received an inheritance." The new reads, "are made an inheritance." But the new is correct. The idea under the figure is that of a son who is the great treasure of his father's love. The same idea under another figure is found in the Old Testament. "Jehovah's portion is his people" (Deut. 32:9). "Save thy people and bless thine heritage" (Ps. 28). "Blessed

be Israel, mine inheritance" (Isa. 29:25). The Christian people as a whole are thought of as God's peculiar treasure—the company he delights in. I am hesitant to press this thought because it so far transcends the common thought of man that it seems like an extravagant or a meaningless expression. But Paul was not an extravagant writer. And this is not an accidental thought that flitted through his mind and was gone. It was a deep-seated idea of his. He speaks about the church being the "body of Christ." He tells us that "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it." He says that his own ambition is to present the church a spotless and "chaste virgin to Christ." Let me speak as if we were not involved in the case. This is the thought: God has a plan in human life and history. Does this seem at first a statement without foundation? Yet a second thought dispels the doubt. If God is not less intelligent than a man he has plans and purposes in all he does. In New England it used to be said that if a boy whittled on a stick and did not make anything but whittlings he revealed a great deficiency in his make-up. He was expected to know what he was making, and then to make it. Is God a mere whittler? Is human history, is the Old Testament history as it converges toward the cross and the despoiled tomb, merely a lot of whittlings? Is God thus deficient in sight and purpose? No man that thinks of it calmly will take that position. No! God must have

a plan for humanity. He has set his heart to do something. And that something is to redeem men from sin and glorify them. If that is true, then he sets his heart on the people he is to redeem. It will be to him a cherished plan. The Christian people are a treasured heritage.

But this truth has value also as an inspiration to watchfulness over our conduct. The Roman Catholic counts it a glory to belong to the "world church." He rejoices that he belongs to an organization that dates from the apostles, that has one head, one creed, one liturgy, one language. In any country he hears the same prayers and the same anthems in the familiar language of his home. It is an inspiration toward being worthy of such a company. Some of us also feel a kind of pride in the church we belong to. It reenforces our motive power, as sails reenforce the power of the engine in the steamer. Paul would remind us that we are members of the "church of God, the pillar and ground of the truth"; the body that is called the "bride of the Lamb." And it prompts us with no little spurring to "walk worthy of our calling."

And he also adds, that the "*Holy Spirit is the 'earnest of our inheritance.'*" That is, the work of the Holy Spirit in us is the first result of his purpose to make us, and to fit us to be his heritage. In Romans (chap. 5) Paul says that our hope will not "make us ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts." That is, we are

not following a will-o'-the-wisp or groundless expectations when we anticipate the future glory. The results are already experienced in part by the changed spirit of our lives. The love that characterizes the heavenly Father has some place, and a growing one, in us. Our sense of forgiveness, our increased kindliness toward people that are not in themselves lovable, our delight in doing good to others, our increased interest in things spiritual, our new liking for the Bible, our broadening views of God's kingdom, our exalted and growing appreciation of Jesus—all these and many more of the same kind are the first-fruits of the work he is doing in us—the "earnest of our inheritance." The full harvest is not yet ripened, but it is ripening. Heaven will not be generically different from this life, but an extension in a more unhindered form of our best experiences here.

Such then are the "riches of his grace toward us in Christ Jesus." If those Ephesians saw the truth they must have been wonderfully helped to stand against the allurements of the old associations, and to endure the persecutions for the faith's sake. And we, if we can receive it, shall find help to meet our responsibilities by often considering what is given to us also as the legitimate successors of those ancient believers.[1]

[1] See Col. 1 : 23; Acts 23 : 6; 24 : 10; 26 : 26; 28 : 20; Rom. 5 : 2; 8 : 20; 12 : 12; 15 : 13; 1 Cor. 13 : 13; 2 Cor. 3 : 12; Gal. 5 : 5; Eph. 1 : 18; 2 : 12; 4 : 4; 1 Peter 1 : 7; 1 Tim. 6 : 14; 2 Peter 1 : 10.

CHAPTER II

THE CHRISTIAN'S SOURCES OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE

AFTER his "inventory," as given in the first verses of the chapter, it would seem almost unnecessary for Paul to have said anything more about the "riches of grace in Christ Jesus." But he was well acquainted with the mind and heart of mankind, and knew that a mere single utterance of great truth is not always effective. He also knew that in his effort to uplift his fellow men he was not working alone. Himself an "ambassador for Christ," he sought help from his Master. So he wrote:

"I cease not to make mention of you in my prayers that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that ye may know."

The same uncertainty hovers about men now. We are all told about the riches of God, and the good things of the Christian life, but yet the appreciation of them is often too small.

A great proportion of the Christians live in a sort of poverty-smitten spirit because they do not really know their riches. They are sincere and

zealous, but they are only slightly conscious of their opportunities and powers. This will appear if we think of some of Paul's expressions, and see how extravagant they seem to be: "I rejoice and will rejoice"; "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God"; "I am persuaded that nothing can separate us from the love of God." Or take the words of the psalmist: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want"; "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord"; "Bless the Lord, O my soul." These people all knew the Lord, and to them these expressions were feeble attempts to tell what they felt and knew, while to many others they seem to be extravagant or poetic exaggerations. And in some people's mouths they would be such, for their knowledge and experience is small. We have all been told the facts just as the Ephesians had; but we have not estimated the facts at their full value. There is need for our best friends to pray for us, as Paul did for us all, that the "God of our Lord Jesus Christ may give us a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him . . . that we may know."

Let us consider more carefully his words. He recognizes two great channels through which the knowledge about religion comes to men: namely, wisdom and revelation. These are parts of one plan. They supplement one another. A man with wisdom only does not know by experience the riches of the Christian life. One may be a very learned theo-

logian and a very ignorant Christian. Henry Ward Beecher once said that he knew the doctrines of theology as a woman knows the pins in a paper of pins, and was utterly disgusted with the whole business. John Calvin, regarded merely as a logical reasoner about the alleged facts of religion, is considered the best theologian the world has ever seen. But he could order a fellow man burned at the stake for differing with him about a doctrine. Mere wisdom does not soften the heart of man.

And, on the other hand, revelation does not meet all the demands. Both are needed.

Wisdom is said to be "the best use of the best means for the best ends." A spirit of wisdom in a farmer would be a good exercise of good judgment in determining what is the best crop to raise on his farm, and how is the best way to raise it. That sort of farmer will read the magazines that discuss such things. His house will have something besides an almanac for reading. He will get the bulletins from the Agricultural Department of the government. He will attend farmers' institutes, and compare notes with the men of his vicinity. He will keep accurate records of his own fields and crops for future reference. That is the "spirit of wisdom" in agriculture.

In business life the "spirit of wisdom" leads a man to read the literature of the subject. He will watch with an alert mind the movements of his time that may affect trade. He will be a student of the

commerce of the world and its conditions. He will keep accurate accounts of profits and losses.

A more complex subject is the training of the family. A "spirit of wisdom" in the knowledge of child nature leads parents to observe carefully, to read, and to think. They will not forget the importance of self-training. Men put wisdom at work in every occupation that interests them. A man does not raise chickens or puppies without it. How can we expect, then, to cultivate Christian character, and to Christianize the community in which we live without putting our best thought in its most effective form into use?

I take it that this is about Paul's idea when he prays that they may have a "spirit of wisdom." It implies that they will make the best use of the best means to gain that knowledge.

Whence comes this wisdom? The first thing we notice in this connection is that our Creator has appointed as chief among the means of obtaining knowledge our thinking faculties. We must use them well. He gave us lungs to breathe with; and ordained that no man can have good health that does not use his lungs to their proper efficiency. There is no substitute for the "natural way." There are some foods that are the natural supply for the waste of our bodies. There are no substitutes. That is God's way. Predigested foods are not the best foods. A man's stomach was not made merely for ornament or amusement.

Children can be brought up in an orphan asylum, by hired nurses; but there is always a lack in the child that was not brought up by his own loving parents in a home where religion was in the air all the time. Under the same principle we may say that some religion may be acquired without much thinking. But there are great truths which a man must know intellectually if he has the strongest faith and the most substantial character. And these truths can only be known by a thoughtful study of them. That is the heaven-ordained channel by which they come into the soul. If a man does not get these truths into his mind he cannot have the confidence such things beget.

There are certain qualities of mind that are produced by meditation, others by acts of devotion. These are important and should be cultivated; but these alone cannot give the man or the woman who faces the active and pungent facts of life a steadfast courage. A man may meditate like the monks, or the priests of India; but he will never by that exercise alone understand how great and good a thing is the Christian hope. Nor will he be able to regulate his active business life by Christian principles, or to discharge his duties as a Christian citizen with wisdom and efficiency.

We see how Jesus laid stress on this thinking element of life. He has been called the great Teacher. The record makes that quality very plain and emphatic. He went about in all Galilee, " teaching

in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom" (Matt. 4:23). "He opened his mouth and taught them" (Matt. 5:2). "He departed to teach in their synagogues" (Matt. 11:1). "I sat daily with you teaching in the temple" (Matt. 26:55). He made three teaching tours throughout the land besides the time spent in teaching in Jerusalem.

But what does it imply to say that he "taught"? What is it to teach? It is quite different from saying that he told them things; or that he awakened their sympathies, or answered their curiosity, or tickled their fancies. To teach is to wind up the wonderful machinery of men's minds, and set it at work making ideas for itself from the material furnished it. When a man teaches he lays some facts down before another, and induces that other to take up the facts and weave them into ideas and activities himself. The attention must be secured, the imagination energized, the memory awakened, the laws of association invoked, the reasoning powers enlisted. The real teacher does not impart knowledge, he only imparts information, and thrills the pupil with a life that transmutes information into knowledge and self-activity. To say then that Jesus taught is to say that he set men to thinking. He honored the thinking faculties and intellectual forces of men. If a preacher should say, "There is no use in trying to teach this congregation," it would be at once called the same as saying that the congregation was not intelligent enough to be

taught. I knew one church that had a minister who preached very high sermons. I suppose they were above the heads of a large part of his congregation. But they liked him, because they said he gave them credit for being intelligent whether they were or not. Jesus honored the intelligence of men in all his teaching. He did not seek assent without reasons. He did not reason about what everybody knew and assented to.

It is this fact about "wisdom" that gives value to all Bible study. Sunday-schools, sermons, religious books, systems of truth are all implied in Paul's idea of "wisdom in the knowledge of God." The study of theology is included in its boundaries; and of course schools where theology is taught. The family circle where the Bible is read and religion is discussed is a part of it. Every man that studies divine things is helping to answer the prayer Paul here records.

But wisdom alone does not meet all the necessities of the Christian life. One may concentrate his mind on the Bible, and on the subject of religion, and yet have a very inadequate idea of God's goodness and of his own worth. The "enlightening of our hearts," as Paul puts it, is a great mystery; but it is a most certain and oft-experienced fact of life. A young man is away from home, full of his business. He is not a disobedient son nor a prodigal son; he has a fair sense of his father's worth. But some day as he is thinking about it, he gets a vision

of his parents that is new. He sees the sacrifice they made to give him an education. How they ofttimes restrained him when he was angry about it; how they denied him things he wanted, for which he thought them stingy. But this afternoon all that comes into his view as a part of their thoughtful discipline, fitting him for the very business efficiency he now has. His eyes fill with tears as he thinks of it. "I never had so high an estimate of my parents before," he says. Whence came this vision of his parents?

Or here is a traveling man, away from home, in a hotel, on Sunday. He has not received any letter, nor had any special reason for it, but, as he thinks, a vision comes into his soul. He sees his wife in a new light. She has cared for the family—his family—in his absence. All the responsibility for the training of the boys and the girls she has borne. She has economized and labored without any complaint. She has given up pleasures and company that she might help him in the task of supporting the household. And he says to himself: "I have been thoughtless and selfish; I have kept back the words of appreciation; I have been a cold, heartless fellow, and I am ashamed of myself." So he writes a letter and tries to tell her his new vision. He makes poor work of it, for he is unaccustomed to the language of compliment as a Scotchman. But he tries, and she is astonished and tearful when she gets it. Now the mystery of it is, why this vision

of things? It was not sought for, but it came down upon him. That is a hint of what is meant by having the "heart enlightened" and by "a spirit of revelation."

In the realm of religion the same process is common. Men come unexpectedly to see beauties in Christ that they had not seen. Paul once wrote: "I have known Christ after the flesh, but now I know him so no more." Henry Ward Beecher once had such a vision of Jesus that he said he never forgot. It was a mount of transfiguration to him, an experience of monumental gladness and awe.

So men have visions of their own sinfulness. Paul said: "I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died" (Rom. 7 : 9). Many of us have had such visions. We call them "convictions of sin." We, who have thought of ourselves as rather above the average in goodness, had some taint of the spirit that the Pharisee had of whom Jesus spoke: I thank thee that I am not as other men, especially like this neighbor of mine that belongs to the other church. One day the glory of ourselves departed, and we said: "Oh, how mean and selfish I can be if I give way to what is in me. It seems as if my heart is as full of evil possibilities as a garden is of weeds." That is an "enlightenment of the heart."

Sometimes we see life itself in a new light. We have been saying, What does it all amount to, any-

way? A man just works and eats and gets food for others to eat, and then dies. What does it profit? Is life worth the bother? If we could get out of it easily, would it not be the best thing? Why not "shuffle off this mortal coil"? But then we might dream. "Aye, there's the rub." Then some notable day there comes down on us a new vision. The kaleidoscope of life presents a new picture to our minds. Human history looks no longer like a sort of aimless wandering of the race like an orbitless comet, but it appears great divine purposes are being wrought out. Some time God's kingdom will come in the earth. Wickedness will be done away. Love will reign. The forces of earth will become the servants of man to make all men see what is the abounding goodness and wisdom of God. And we are a part of that history.

Or, to change the figure, a man sees himself as one note of that great coming chorus of earth to the praise of God and the delight of all creation. He is one of that numberless company that is being recruited from earth to share in future conditions so glorious that the best of apostles said of it: "It is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him, for we shall see him even as he is" (1 John 3:2).

Or a man has been thinking of the Bible as an old-fashioned book outgrown by the intelligence of the age. But one day it dawns on him that it is

the oldest history of the world. It gives the noblest type of men its highest sanction. Parts of it set the fashion of living and thinking about God three thousand four hundred years ago, and its fashion is getting more and more to be the fashion of the world. It is the only book that tells us anything about the future life of individuals, or the future of the human race on earth. Then it seems to him to be in fact as well as in the rhetoric of its admirers "the Book of books," incomparable in its wisdom, its beauty, and its moral excellence.

Another day we saw the church of God with its glory on. It appeared to be the company through which the noblest ideals are being realized in life. It contains all God-loving souls in all countries and all ages. It is the one only company that is organized with no other purpose than to make men good and the world happy. It is the pattern association for the world to follow. All family teaching is in its curriculum, all sociology is fundamentally taught by its great leaders. It is the "church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15).

So through all the various departments of life, we get these mysterious "revelations" of things. We may live much of the time in the fog, or the gloom, but there are occasions when the sun shines and we see things in clear light. Our progress and our steadfastness in Christian faith and service are always dependent on this element of enlightenment.

Paul prayed that such enlightenment might be given us. We shall be in line with the best success if we too keep open hearts toward the Father, and ask him daily for such revelation and enlightenments as will enliven and encourage us.

CHAPTER III

THREE SPECIAL REQUISITES

"That ye may know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe."—Eph. 1 : 18, 19.

In a former study we found that two sources of information are both open and needed for us to obtain a full appreciation of what are our Christian possessions: namely, human thinking and help from above—"wisdom" and "revelation." Now we will try and put our own thinking powers at work, and also humbly ask, as Milton asked in writing his "Paradise Lost":

> O Spirit that dost prefer
> Before all temples th' upright heart and pure,
> Instruct me, for thou knowest.

I

And the first requisite is that we "*know the hope of his calling.*" That is, the hope which is implied and involved in the fact that God calls us to our faith in Christ. This takes for granted, what every thoughtful Christian assents to, that he is a Christian

primarily in response to some sort of "call" from above. Our whole Christian life as a whole does not consist of a painful search for God, but is a response to his searching for us. The Saviour was not careless in his expressions when he compared men to lost sheep, and himself to a shepherd seeking them. Our answer to his call is the substance of our Christian life. Paul does not argue that point, for he did not need to. Into our life has come a "call." What is implied in that fact?

The "hope of his calling," such as it is, is measured by the character of the one that calls. If I should get a letter from Giovanni Anotelli, asking me to meet him in New York to-morrow at three o'clock, the first question I should ask would be, "Who is this Giovanni Anotelli?" And if I was told that he is the organ-grinder who cheers our streets in the springtime, I should say: "I cannot take the trouble to go there. Let him either come to me, or tell me what he wants and who he is." If the letter was signed by the chairman of the pulpit committee of some important church I should probably wire him that I am not in the field for a pastorate, but will meet him as desired. If the letter came from President Wilson I should go at once; and I should tell my wife that as soon as I find out whether it is a call to be chaplain to the House of Representatives, or to go on a special mission to China, to persuade Yuan Shi Kai not to establish the Confucian Church, I will wire her. A call from the President awakens

the keenest expectations. A call from the organ-grinder does little but provoke a smile.

What then is implied when a man feels that some persistent mysterious voice within him that he calls God's voice, has called him to any sort of task or duty? It must be some good destiny; for nothing else could come from the Divine. It must be some great destiny, for he does not deal in small matters. It must have some good purpose in this life, for his kingdom is to come in earth as in heaven. It must reach into the next life, for nothing human perfects itself or is perfected here in this world. And it must be something in which we have a part and a task; for while it is "God working in us to will and to do of his pleasure," we are to "work out"—that is, finish up—"our salvation with fear and trembling."

And it is important that we do not miss his thought for us. If a man were to think that he is called to be the avenger of crimes against humanity and should begin to persecute he would lose his time and labor; for vengeance is not man's. If one were to think himself called to build up a great educational system, and it turned out that no such thing was in his call, he too would lose his time and his house of wood and stubble would be burned, though "he himself would be saved, yet so as by fire." If one should think it his only business to get ready for heaven, he might utterly neglect and waste the opportunities for good that lie all about him. If he

should forget that he is to have a future life, he might give excellent attention to this life and be poor in all that he can take with him to the next life. If one hopes for too little he falls short of his opportunities. If he hopes for the wrong thing he wastes his time and effort.

And how much vagueness there is about this matter! If you were to write a friend to-day what you regard as the substance of the Christian hope, what would you write? Would you say, "I hope to become a perfect man"? "I hope to have a comfortable life in the future"? "I look forward to a life of ease"? or "a life of work"? Will you meet all the world's people or a few of them? Is this world to become truly Christian or to be destroyed? Is society here to be regenerated or not? Unless we have some rather definite answer to these and similar questions our own efforts at Christian living will be very much like the work of a boy with a new knife—he just whittles without making anything. In all personal and political relations we need the guidance and the concentration that comes from knowing what we have a right to expect in our Christian life.

What then may we hope for? We have a right to expect that now we have taken our stand on the Lord's side *he will help us to be faithful.* If we had begun the Christian life "on our own hook," we might not feel at all certain that we should have grit enough and patience enough to hold out. But

"he that begun a good work in us will continue it until the day of Jesus Christ." We are told at the outset, "He that believeth in the Lord Jesus shall not perish, but shall have eternal life"; and again, "He will with every trial find a way of escape." So the youngest and the weakest may confidently hope that in no conflict with evil need he be worsted, in no responsibility of life will he be left to carry the load alone.

We may hope that *the Spirit of God will work in us to remove and subdue the evil that remains from the old life.* John wrote, "Of Christ's fulness have all we received." Paul wrote: "We, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into his image from glory to glory." So that those of us that find the old Adam in us still troublesome need not despair. The fact that it troubles us is a hopeful sign. We all brought over into the Christian life much baggage from the old life. Like the wife of Jacob, we brought some of the family gods stowed away in the luggage. But this will be eliminated. If we were satisfied to let it remain in control it would be discouraging; but the struggle is big with hope for victory. It is "God working in us to will and to do of his good pleasure."

The converted drunkard may hope that the grace of God will set him triumphant over his enemy. The man in whose tongue there remains some sediment of the old profanity may hope to have it all dissolved away. The quick-tempered man may hope

to come into full control of himself. The covetous man may expect that the estimates of values he now has will give place to much better ones, and that the glitter of gold will not always dazzle his eyes. The man or woman that cannot now judge the neighbor charitably may be rid of the habit of harsh judgment. The man that sees the world through blue glasses, and thinks all is going wrong, the church is unfaithful, business all dishonest, politics hopelessly corrupt, may come to see that the church is the family of God; that business is carried on the shoulders of the righteous; that politics are sweeping on, in spite of eddies where the current runs backward, toward a higher and broader sense of human rights and of divine righteousness.

This is what is going on all the time. Men, like the hard, sour apples of June and July, are getting mellower and sweeter and larger as the August and September of life approaches. The hard and troublesome qualities about us are not necessarily permanent. It is the very business of our Lord to remove them, and we may hope that he will help us to succeed.

We may hope to be useful. The conception of the Christian life that has become in the last twenty-five years one of the most prominent, is that it is a life of usefulness. It is the common idea now that every one should be doing some good to some one. John Wesley used to say, in simple words filled with thought of big things:

Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.

That is the commonly accepted program of a right life. It was not always so. Jesus said, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." His followers have always known that; but it has a new emphasis of late. It is no longer left for practice to the ministers, and the specially good folks, but it is expected of all.

But many Christians feel that they have no usefulness, and because of their meager talents cannot have much. But every one may be of use. Probably Job never knew, or suspected what use he would be to the world of troubled men and women. He had great trial. Tortured by his awful sores, that made him almost grovel in corruption, he met the sneers of his wife and the false accusations of his friends and the long delay of his justification. But in all of it he stood like the rock of Gibraltar against storms, and would not mistrust his God. He sinned not with his mouth.

I knew a poor Greek in Yonkers, who came into church one Sunday, and without knowing the custom of the place, went into the far end of a rich man's pew. When the rich man came in, being a

true Christian man, he welcomed him. For twenty years the Greek has occupied the inner end of that pew. One day the collection for missions was taken, and this poor man, who had a small income from tinkering watches, put a dollar bill in the basket. The rich man saw it. The next day I was in the rich man's office, and he said to me: "I was made ashamed of myself yesterday when that poor man gave his dollar bill. Here is a hundred dollars for the collection." Now I say that that humble man, by doing his duty quietly, was useful in bringing the one hundred dollars next day, and I tell this story now to enlarge his usefulness by its influence on you.

A poor widow in Jerusalem had saved a very little for some emergency. It was for her what a very snug savings-bank account is to you. But one day she went to the temple with a very grateful heart to worship God, and while there she thought of her mercies, and her heart was glad. Then she remembered that some were even poorer than she was, and seeing the box for the offerings in the temple she went over and put her whole savings in the box, and prayed: "O Lord, who hast been so kind to me, bless this to the good of some other needy widow, and may it lead her to trust thee." It was all done in a quiet, unostentatious way. But Jesus saw it, and so called attention to it, and it has been helping the poor ever since. The faithful man—faithful in his own sphere of action—is never

useless. He may be but a brick in the wall of society, or a stone in the foundation of a great building, but the tone of society and the righteousness of a community are composed of the conduct of the common men and women.

Such are the hopes we may rightfully cherish because God has called us to be saints.

II

The second thing to know is "*the glory of his inheritance in the saints.*" Paul has said (ver. 11) that we "are made a heritage" of the Lord. We are his treasure. Here Paul thinks it a great glory to be the heritage of God. It makes a great difference whether a man thinks himself as a member of a rowdy club, or a band of gentlemen. Last night I saw in the subway three boys. One of them had a revolver, and he was going up and down the well-filled car brandishing it like a robber. Now he was not a vicious boy, but in his imagination he was a member of the Jesse James gang, and he was regulating his conduct by what he conceived was the way that Jesse James would act. If he had been a member of the Scouts he would have been a very different boy. He would have given his seat to the old men or women. He would have kept out of the way of other passengers, and been a gentleman. It has been found that the uniform of a scout or a brigade-boy holds boys up to a dignified and prompt obedience with great success.

The minister that wished he did not have on his robe of office so that he might whip his stubborn, balky horse; the minister that said he needed a week at home to get off the negligee manners of his summer in the woods—both these felt the same influence that Paul had in mind when he wrote this sentence. The true American when abroad, recalling that he is an American and as such a representative of his country, feels it. The fifty thousand Christian Endeavorers that marched the streets of New York at one of the conventions when only one man in the whole company dishonored his company by getting disorderly—those young men and women off on a pleasure trip without chaperons, but held to dignity by the sense of being part of the Christian host, by the glory of being his inheritance in the saints—all these knew what Paul was talking about in this verse. They felt themselves exalted by the reflected glory of the church. And their sense of exaltation was dependent on the view they had of the church's glory.

Suppose a man thinks his church encircles the earth, having one liturgy in one holy tongue, governed by one head, making confession in one symbol, that view will produce one set of feelings and one kind of conduct in him who has it. Or suppose he does not think so much about that as he does about the fact that it fosters and exemplifies the Christlike character everywhere, that it is the company of men who are to make known to angels

and principalities what sort of people they are who are led by the teachings of Jesus, and who are to make known what is the "manifold wisdom of God"—then he will have another set of feelings, and be another sort of a man, and have a different sort of conduct.

If a minister thinks the glory of the church is in its bigness he will rejoice in numbers, and be a great gatherer of statistics. If he thinks it "glorious in holiness" he will only rejoice at his best when he sees men and women being more than usually holy; and his highest joy will be when he finds that his church is reckoned as the most Christlike one in his city.

This subtle but sure connection between what a man thinks about God's heritage and what he does in his own life is certain to determine what sort of activities and spiritual effort will take the leading place in his life.

If, therefore, he does not rightly conceive of the glory of his heritage he will choose the wrong path and labor in the wrong way, and thus make no real addition to the forces of righteousness in his community.

He will labor honestly, it may be, but vainly. He will be "saved," but "his work be burned."

What then is the true glory of the church?

First, *it is the excellency of its aim.* In April, 1900, a great missionary conference was held in New York City. Missionaries and mission sup-

porters from all the world were there. John G. Paton, who had lived among the cannibals thirty-four years and tamed them by his preaching; Dr. William Ashmore, who had preached to the Chinese fifty years; J. Hudson Taylor, who had pushed farther into the heart of China than others; bishops from foreign countries; noted pastors from all Christian lands—such were the persons in attendance. Ex-president Harrison presided. President McKinley was there to speak, Theodore Roosevelt, then governor of New York, and several hundred other men of less note but not less worthy, right from the face-to-face contact with heathenism in its darker and lighter phases, gave addresses on various related themes. For ten days not only was Carnegie Hall filled to overflowing, but scores of other sessions were held outside. No gathering so large, and so truly ecumenical was ever held anywhere, with perhaps the exception of the Congress of Religions in Chicago in 1893, and none so vital to the world's interests. If one were looking for bigness he might have gone there, and looking on that great company have said: "This is glorious; I am proud to be here as one of them."

But there was something else than bigness there. What brought that company together? The motive of their coming must be greater than the meeting as cause must be greater than results. Was it to encourage the sale of some commodity? Was it to make a world treaty of commerce? to plan a big

banking scheme? to regulate freight rates for world trade? to promote peace treaties? No, not these, great as they are, but something that underlies all these. It was to plan for united effort to send men to all the world with the truths and influences that will bring them up to their true destiny as men. It was to preach a doctrine, and tell them of a Saviour that would comfort their sad hearts; bring kindness to their homes and health to their bodies; quiet their vain fears; awaken new joys; kindle new hopes for this life and the next. It was, to use Paul's language, "To gather together in one all things in Christ to the praise of the glory of his grace." If they succeed in their endeavor all nations will become as one family; they will get a common language; trade will be unrestricted; wars will cease; three-fourths of the cost of the government will be saved. "The world will escape from the bondage of avarice and luxury which now torments our complicated artificial life. Instead of loading themselves down on life's journey with so many boxes of superfluous luggage and bric-à-brac that they are forced to sit down by the roadside and gasp for breath; instead of wearing themselves out in the dirty ways of competition and show because they cannot escape in the race for wealth and fashion, they will turn to quiet ways, lowly pleasures, simple joys, plain living, and high thinking. They will find their happiness in the knowledge that God loves them, and Christ died for them, and heaven is sure. Their

hearts will be set free to rejoice in the light of the sun, in the blue of the sky, in the splendor of the sea, in the peace of the hills, in the song of the birds, in the beauty of flowers, in the taste of good food, in the charm of music, in the blessings of love and friendship." (Henry Van Dyke.) To be *engaged in such an undertaking, that is the glory of the church; and to be a part of such work is itself glorious.*

And the church is engaged in this work for the same reason that all Christian hearts are interested in it—because they are inwardly, spontaneously moved to it. No missionary goes because he is ordered by his church to go. It is voluntary. That is what makes it glorious. God has so wrought in the hearts of these people that they turn to the task of uplifting men. To be a real member of the heritage of God is to have some of that inner hunger to do good. One of the speakers at the conference said: "Life means infinitely more than idleness. And the most certain way of failing to gain any pleasure is to take pleasure as your aim in life. The life worth living is the life of the man who at the end can look backward and say: I have stumbled, I have blundered, I have left undone, I have done what had better been left undone; but I strove to leave the world a little better than I found it." (Theodore Roosevelt.)

The reputed worth of a man in the present-day practical world is measured by what he actually accomplishes; but, the true worth of a man is not

wholly measured except by considering also what he attempts. So the church is not to be wholly measured by what it has failed to do, but by what with its inmost soul it has sought and is seeking to do. Its special business is to uplift men. What larger aim can we think of than to preach the gospel of the grace of God to every creature, and to try and make the kingdom of God come in the whole earth as it is come in heaven? Let no young man or woman hesitate to be known as one that belongs to a church having such an aim as that.

There is also a *great glory to the church in the men and women that compose its leadership.* The writer of Hebrews said: "We are come unto the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven and to the spirits of just men made perfect." In this company is Moses, the greatest lawgiver of history. The moral code he promulgated has more people acknowledging its wisdom and authority than any or all others. The prophets of Israel have no equals among the preachers of the world. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, and Zechariah have no peers in history. The pulpits of the Christian church tower above all orators. The poets are led by David, Milton, Dante, and Shakespeare. The music that thrills and enchants has come from the Beethovens, the Handels, the Mozarts, and the Christian tunemakers. Human prosperity has flourished best where the Christian ideals have been expressed in the governments. Families are happiest

when Jesus is the friend of the household. It is good for us to recall this often, and let it stimulate us to our part in the great procession of the good and kind.

And it *is a glory that the church is the chosen instrument for the uplift of the world.* Other agencies help in the task. But the one agency that has no other business in the world, and that makes requisition on all other businesses for its help, is the "church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth." Does any secret society exist for such a purpose? Is there any political party with such an aim? Was the Great Commission given to any special nation or race? No. We have no competitors in our business. The people that believe in Christ are the only ones that can propagate his doctrine, for they alone know it. Other agencies may build the railroads, and sail the seas; others may seek to unify the moral standards, and to stop the wars; but to the church is given the task of propagating a truth that underlies and sustains all these other aims and of teaching men the manifold wisdom of God.

And the church has *glory in its success.* Think of it a moment. It has continued since Abraham's time without a break. Success? If time and growth make success there is no success like the success of the church. The religion of Babylon? No one lives to tell us what it was. Not more than six men in the world can read the tablets that record its his-

tory. Egypt? Its ceremonies must be read on the tombs. No voice chants their funeral dirges. Rome and Greece? Their temples are in dust or utilized as places for worship by Christians.

Down the ages the church of Jesus marches with its strength unabated, its eye undimmed, and its shoes unworn by its travels. Other religions have grown, blossomed, and died, and their stumps have turned to dust, but this stands like a green bay tree, planted by the rivers of water, whose leaves fade not and whose fruit appears in its season.

III

And the third thing we need to know is *"the power of God toward us who believe."* This is the more important because the task we have on hand is great and difficult. Only the man that has not really tried to be a wholly good man will say that it is easy to live the Christian life. We have heard evangelists say, and the hymn-book tells us to sing:

> Nothing either great or small
> Remains for me to do.
> Jesus died and paid it all—
> All the debt I owe.

It would be difficult to get more nonsense into so few words than is contained in them. The only sense in which they are true at all is that so far as a sacrifice of a life for us was needed, Jesus has made that sacrifice. He has fulfilled whatever there

was to be fulfilled in a typical ceremonial law. But he did not tell men there was nothing to be done. He taught that except a man leaves all that he has he cannot be his disciple. He said, "Take my yoke upon you." That does not mean, "Go along with me when it is good traveling." It means, "Associate your life with mine for service and for guidance." It is giving up self as the supreme master and taking him as pilot and master.

The other hymn, made when it was not financially profitable to write pious verse at three dollars a hymn, is nearer the truth:

> A charge to keep I have,
> A God to glorify,
> A never-dying soul to save,
> And fit it for the skies.

When we see the case clearly our cry is, "Lord, who is sufficient for these things?" We are more like the young man at Dothan who, when he saw the Syrian hosts, was afraid. But the prophet said, "Lord, open the young man's eyes." Then he saw the mountain full of horses and chariots round about the prophet.

Paul's prayer was the same in substance: "Lord, make them know the power of God toward them."

Is God willing to give me power to live the Christian life in my peculiar surroundings? Is he willing to give such power to his churches that they can withstand the subtle influences that threaten their

life? Will he exert his power to overcome the intense and many-sided hostility of the worldly environment? Paul prayed that we might see the power, and the willingness of God to exert that power. And, as if he wanted to help us see it, God gives us a sort of yardstick with which to measure it. "According to the mighty power that he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him on high." That is the measure.

Men have faith and courage for a friend while he lives. But death marks the limit of their hope. When the breath is gone we go away, saying, "It is over now. Let us adjust ourselves to the fact that henceforth the word 'never' has a new meaning." But right here when we lose all hope, God begins. Jesus was dead. All that his disciples had hoped for faded out as the rainbow fades when the rain stops. It was all beauty and no substance. Jesus was buried. But that first Sunday morning when the tomb "gave up the dead that was in it," a new power was launched in the world, a new reenforcement enlisted for the disciples. That is our hope now.

Mr. Spurgeon once said he never laughed when studying a text but once. He was thinking on the words, "My grace is sufficient for thee," and as he thought there came into his mind the picture of a great group of Egyptian granaries in Joseph's time, where grain to supply Egypt for seven years was stored. And down in one corner was a little

mouse worrying whether there was enough for him to live on. So here, when we think it over, there is a sort of humor in the thought that we may not have power to make life a success. It is not wholly unnatural that we should ask about the supply. We see what is to be done in our own hearts before they are completely right. We see the forces of rum and rottenness in the world about us, and the great combination of men for every purpose and for all purposes except spiritual ones. But look at Christ. He was dead and is now enthroned. Look at this Jesus and tell me, is there power to help these Christians against Pilate and the Jewish council? The resurrection is the answer.

Think of Peter denying his Lord with oaths. Will that man ever repent and be a good man? The answer is Jesus standing by him and saying, "Peter, feed my lambs."

See this Saul persecuting the church and haling men and women to prison and to death for faith in Jesus. Will he succeed in smothering the faith of men? Find the answer in the flash of Jesus' eye on the way to Damascus, and hear Paul's meek reply, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

Can that power help us to stand and win our fight? There were and are great thrones hostile to the kingdom of Jesus; will they prevail? Jesus is set at God's right hand far above all authority

and power. Will he not make the wrath of man to praise him?

The church has problems large and difficult. Its doctrinal tasks are many, its mission work is world-wide, its task in making the customs of men conform to the principles of Jesus are to mere human strength unattainable. But the power that raised Jesus from the dead and set him on high is fully competent.

So these three things let us try to know well: The hope of our calling, the glory of the church, the power available for us. And may the spirit of both wisdom and revelation be our channel of knowledge.

CHAPTER IV

TOGETHER

"God, being rich in mercy, . . quickened us together in Christ . . . and raised us up together . . and made us sit together in heavenly things. . . So that now in Christ Jesus ye who once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ . . . for he brake down the middle wall of partition. . . So then ye are no more strangers, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."—Eph. 2 : 4-19.

THE central shrine of the Jewish worship was at Jerusalem. There was the temple built after the pattern of the tabernacle in the wilderness. Around it gathered the most sacred associations of the people, and worship to be complete must be observed there It was incumbent on faithful Jews to go yearly if possible to that temple for worship. In Paul's time the doctrinal authorities lived there. Religious questions were settled by the Sanhedrin having its sessions in Jerusalem.

The temple building had its inner court, where was the holy of holies into which only the priests could ever go, and that under the strictest of regulations. An outer court was open for all Jews to come and worship. Around that court was a wall,

through which was a gate of entrance. Over that gate was a stone set, on which was this inscription: "Let no stranger pass this gate, for if he does he must give account for his life, for he will certainly lose it." This stone was found in the last century among the ruins of Jerusalem. A plaster cast of it can be seen in many libraries. It was there when Paul went in and out. In the twenty-first of Acts we read how infuriated the Jews were because they supposed that Paul had brought a Greek through that gate into the court made only for Jews. That wall was a symbol of the separation of Jews from all others. It impressed its lessons indelibly on all that saw it. Even the Gentiles that were permitted to come into the more outer parts of the temple area, and to have some small share of the worship could not miss the lesson for them, that they were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel." These ideas of separation were well known in every city where Jews lived.

The more ceremonious of the Jews had never been accustomed to go into public assemblies with Gentiles, much less join them in a social gathering. We remember how Peter was called to account by his Jewish brethren because he went into the house of a reverent heathen, Cornelius. (Acts 11 : 3-8.) They said, "You have even eaten with Gentiles." And Peter could only defend himself by showing that he went reluctantly and under divine instructions.

The church in Ephesus was not a social club with a selected membership. The gospel was announced to all classes; and all believers were at once admitted into the company, "having all the rights and privileges" of membership. Some of them had been idolaters; some had been Jews; and some had come from the serious-minded of no faith. But they were brought together in one organization. The members met in the private houses of the believers to worship and to hear instruction. And as to some extent community of goods existed, there they sat down and ate together at the common meals and at the Lord's Supper as members of his church. And the world over, to eat together is the symbol of equality. You may remember how some of the people of this country in this late age of Christian teaching were greatly disturbed because one of our presidents once invited a noted Negro citizen to remain to lunch with him instead of sending him out to a restaurant. It seemed too much like recognition of what is called "social equality." And it was deemed of enough importance to receive attention by a great political convention. But here in Ephesus it was not a single event that might never be repeated, but was the adoption of a custom that was to continue. And with the same emphasis Gentiles had been taught to think that the Jews were the special people of Jehovah, the race from which the Saviour came. Paul, in his preaching, quoted to them Jewish prophecies, and he taught them

Jewish ethics in all his instruction on moral conduct. They had first heard of this new religion in Jewish synagogues. It came from the lips of a Jewish preacher. And now they themselves are counted as among the followers of this Jewish Messiah, full partakers of the ripened fruit of a Jewish tree. What are their relations to these people that they have been taught to think were nearer to Jehovah than themselves? They were like a Negro man in our Congress. What will he do? How will he feel? What recognition ought he to claim? He is a Congressman; is he also a man? or something less than a man?

We now have many phases of the same difficulty, growing from the same root. Especially here in our cities where different races mingle. It is not with us so much racial antagonisms and prejudice as it is race indifference. It is a lack of care rather than a dislike. But in every church there is need to awaken fellowship with others than those of the Anglo-Saxon race, which in some quarters assumes a superior attitude toward the rest of the world as if its record had not been as much stained by cruelty and wickedness as any other record.

Then there are theological antagonisms. Not long since I heard the pastor of one of our largest churches say that there was room in the world for Mohammedans and Unitarians and Christian Scientists, but not an inch of room in a Baptist church for the man that did not interpret the Scriptures

as he did, or that denied the full verbal inspiration of all that we call Bible! No room in the church for such as differ in their understanding of Scripture! Cannot eat the Lord's Supper with such as think inspiration is real but not verbal! So there are inequalities in social conditions that hinder the fullest fellowship of the church, and denominational antagonisms that hinder the fullest Christian activities and usefulness. And there is a sort of separation between old and young that deprives the churches of some very blessed mutual good that would be attained if these mingled more together.

It will be worth while therefore for us to consider how Paul dealt with the fundamental questions. We may find help in our own tasks.

He had no precedent to follow. There was no book of church etiquette for him to consult. There was no council of ministers for him to ask wisdom of. He must assume the responsibility. He alone must instruct the people; they looked to him for authoritative teaching.

On the other hand, Paul was not in his own mind halting between two opinions. He was a Jew, but he had long before that gotten past the feeling, or the opinion, that he must maintain Jewish ceremonies. Yet he was not so much in sympathy with Gentiles that he did not have a sense of sympathy with the Jews. He was unprejudiced. But with him it was not so much a matter of reasoned conclusion as of instinctive decision. He was so carried

away with the enthusiasm of one great idea that he lost sight of all difficulties or diplomacies in his zeal to declare the truth and let the great idea have the right of way. His mind having accepted the fundamental facts, and being alert, enkindled as it was, and his heart being in full sympathy, he by reasoning as quick as an intuition saw the conclusion and wrote it without hedging or apology. And here the idea stands like a mountain on the plain so clear that none who read can miss it. And this is it, *God is gathering into one all things in Christ.* (1 : 10.) That is the ultimate result at which the whole dispensation aims.

And how reasonable such an aim appears. A loving father would not be content to have some of his children hostile to others. Nor would he encourage the idea that some of them might sit with him at his table and others be kept away. The very name "Father" contradicts all such thoughts. "Father" is itself a prophecy of what Paul says is the aim of the dispensation, for it implies "children," and "children" means equality of rights.

Paul would make this feeling of equality in the family emphatic. He would say or do something to cause the feeling to arise in their hearts so that it would have some basis other than the dictum of the apostle himself.

Some time ago Count Aponyi, from Austria, was in this country in the interests of international peace. He said to his audience in Philadelphia that

we in America do not fully appreciate the hindrances to peace among the nations of Europe. Our idea that nations of Europe can work together as smoothly as the States of our republic is not well founded. Here in our country we have State laws that are homogeneous, and customs that are very similar. Our population has come from one State into another. They have mutual confidence. But European nations have had centuries of mutual suspicion, and generations of tyranny on the part of the strong. They have religious differences that are very fundamental. They have laws very different in different states. No mutual peace can exist until there is mutual confidence; and that does not now exist. That, the count said, can only come by acquaintance and by gradual approach to similarity in religion and customs. Two things help this: Commerce and the institutions of religion. We must keep up the church; send out its representatives; approach each other as churchmen, not as nations, until by reason of common faith and common religious undertakings we create a condition of good feeling between the common people; then we can have peace.

It was this same method that Paul was following in this letter. He knew that there must come the good feeling. And the way to have that was to show them their common interest in necessary and blessed things. So the word "together" may be taken as the keyword of this part of his argument. He goes

on to point out the things and experience in which both the Jew and the Gentile are jointly interested.

Let us follow the thread of his thought. Speaking as a Jew, he says: "*We were both of us dead in trespasses and sins.*" "Dead" does not mean physically dead, but has the metaphorical sense of "unresponsive to spiritual things." The selfish and self-centered passions had control. The higher things of religion made no impression. "*We were all by nature children of wrath, even as others.*"

But "*you hath he quickened.*" This word "quickened" has not the meaning commonly given it by us. We tell a boy to go quickly when we mean that he is to hurry his steps. We say, I want a quick reply. But in the New Testament it means, as the Greek word does, to make alive that which was not alive. It stands over against the word "dead," and means just the opposite of what "dead" means here. Those people had been made sensitive to the appeals of the higher life. It was not their own power, but it was God's power working in them. And in that experience both Jews and Gentiles shared alike. Neither was better than the other; Jews and Gentiles were "together" in their hopeless condition, and they are now "together" in their alive condition.

This is a fact to be kept in mind now. All classes of men and women, if they are spiritually alive, have been made so by the grace of God. In many things our experiences, like our temperaments and our

education differ; but we all owe to the quickening grace of God the sensitiveness of our souls to Christian truth. This foundation fact we may not safely overlook. All sorts and conditions of men are by nature in one condition. Measured by some standards they differ. Some are more refined than others; some are more wicked in act and feeling; some more brutal; some more worldly-minded. But we are often surprised to find that under the right kind of circumstances the thought and perhaps the very acts of the hardened sinner are possible to ourselves. We are unlike others because of restraining influences rather than because of a purer nature. Tested by the supreme standard, we are by nature in the list of those that need the help of God to be right in heart and life. If we do not start from a common condition Paul's reasoning applied to us would be inconclusive. But we were "together"—common members of the "short-comer family." The man and his coachman, the woman and her maid, the business man and his customer, the white man and the yellow man, the American and the Japanese are together in the start, and all owe their Christian faith, if they have it, to the quickening influences of the truth and the spirit of God. It goes up from the child and the servant through the whole family.

But he lists another common blessing, "*He raised us up together.* This "raised us up" does not mean bodily resurrection, for we were not bodily dead.

Paul gives it the metaphorical use. Our Christian life is, in his thought, a life as new to us as the resurrection life of Jesus was new to him. Paul has this vivid conception of the Christian life. He thinks of it as succeeding the deadness of which he speaks. In one place he says: "If any man be in Christ Jesus all things are become new, old things have passed away." John has the same use when he says, quoting Jesus (John 5 : 25): "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." He speaks there, not of the bodily dead, but of the spiritually dead, for in following verses (28, 29) he says, "And the hour is coming"—but he does not say and now is—"when all that are in the graves"—the bodily dead—"shall come forth." So I take it Paul here means to say that we Christians have all been raised into the Christian life together by divine help. We are living on a higher plane than formerly. These New England Americans, these followers of William Penn, these Italian converts, these Hungarian immigrants that have learned the new song—all these came out of the tomb of irreligion into the life of the Christian world by the riches of divine grace.

As Lowell somewhere said of some "thrown-together" travelers who found they all could speak English:

> The wars the centuries interposed,
> Abolished in the truce of common speech.

We read in the accounts of the Dayton flood how all classes from the dependent poor to the very wealthy stood in line and received their supplies from the common fund—all on a level.

And then the apostle records another thing in which all are "together." "*Made us sit together in heavenly things in Christ Jesus.*" That is, we who are in Christ all may share in the heavenly blessings. One man sings, "Happy day when Jesus washed my sins away"; and his coachman joins in the chorus. The wealthy lady goes to the prayer-meeting and sings:

> Oh, to grace how great a debtor
> Daily I'm constrained to be;

and her seamstress or her kitchen help are there, and they sing it with her. The captain of industry says, "By the grace of God I am what I am"; and his factory men say, "God's grace is our only hope." The President of the United States says: "I look for a city that hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God"; and his chauffeur says, "This world is not my home."

The company of believers meet, having all degrees of intellectual culture, and from every shade of aristocracy and variety of material circumstances, and they find the story of Christ and the love of Christ equally for them all. The songs, the prayers, the praises, the hopes are alike. They "sit together in heavenly things." In intellectual things they can-

not be together, nor in financial matters; in social tastes they are still foreigners to one another; but in things Christian they "sit together"!

We cannot be overcareful in getting this thought clearly in mind. This man who was ignorant and depraved and had a long experience at it, who was an expert in meanness and a prince in wickedness, and this other man who has been all the time you have known him a good man, as you call him—yet Christ died for both, and in that sense they stand "together." One owed his master ten talents more than he could pay, and the other owed his master ten thousand more, but both were bankrupts. One paid nothing on the dollar, and the other paid nothing. The creditors of one lost all they had loaned him, and the creditors of the other lost all they had loaned. If these men begin business again, they start at the same level. By the grace of the State they are set free from the bondage of debt. Neither of them can call the other names; and it would not be a fine trait of character for one to feel above the other. In some such sense all Christians have come through the proceedings of spiritual bankruptcy. And each one is now given a new start. Each has the help of Jesus; all have the promises, and the hopes, and the help alike, under a new régime. Thus does Paul show that all classes are together; together in need, together in quickening, together in the new life, together in the enjoyment of Christian experiences, and his thought

is, "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder."

And now, as if he would drive home his thought more thoroughly, he addresses the Gentile portion of the church: "*Wherefore remember, that once ye the Gentiles . . . were strangers from the covenants of promise; . . but now ye are made nigh. . . For he is our peace . . . who brake down the middle wall of partition.*"

That partition wall, and with it all that it signified, is broken down. He does not say it ought to be broken down, nor that they ought to break it down. But he says it is broken down. God himself has broken it down. When he showed mercy to Gentiles he was breaking it down. When he sent Paul out to preach to them he was breaking it down. But when he gave to Gentiles the same blessings, forgiveness, and peace, that he gave to others, he laid it flat and showed that henceforth the way was alike open to all. This is now verified in experience. A doctor in Cincinnati, who was in trouble about his theology, came to me for counsel, and told me he was about to conclude that he was not a Christian at all. He was a wealthy man, moving in the best society, brought up to think the slaves of the South were less than men, and he held to the social segregation of the Negro tenaciously. I said to him: "Doctor, if you were in the heart of Africa and found a native who in broken language made you to know that he had heard Jesus and

believed in him, what would you do?" He replied at once, "I would give him my hand in fellowship." The middle wall of partition was broken down in that man's heart. At a meeting of the Home Mission Society in St. Louis there were on the platform together representatives of nine tribes of American Indians, all having perfect equality in Christian standing and privilege. I saw one Indian with a face as black and about as expressionless as a kitchen stove, stolid, stoical, unreadable. But one White Arm, a chief of the Crow tribe, who had been brought there to show him the Christian way, and who had never before acknowledged Jesus, was moved to say a word. He stood up and said, through an interpreter, "White Arm wants to go in the Jesus road." That was his first confession of interest in the matter. I sat where I could see the face of the stolid Indian of whom I spoke. It lit up with a joy and sympathy that I have never seen excelled in any face. And, turning toward White Arm, he spoke in sign language some word of congratulation to him over his confession of Jesus.

At the same meeting representatives of eleven European nationalities were introduced, and all "sat together in heavenly things"; they were already gathered into the "Christ-centered family."

"*Having slain the enmity thereby.*" What a wondrous fact that is! The death of Christ the weapon to slay the enmity between races! Age-long hatreds dead before the love that was crucified!

And now comes Paul's conclusion: "*So then ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but are fellow citizens and of the household of God.*" It was not enough that they were citizens. There is a stronger tie—the family tie. They were "of the household." They were built upon the foundation of the apostolic teaching, and the supplementary teaching of the New Testament preachers—the spirit-bearing men of that time—Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.

This chapter then shows us the great basis of Christian unity. Such unity is based upon our common relation to Jesus. It stands not upon a common intellectual conception of things, nor upon a common sociological basis. It rests upon our common debt of gratitude to Jesus for having quickened us and made us "sit together" in matters heavenly. As we come therefore to have better view of Jesus we shall come nearer to our fellow Christians. The human distinctions that spring up in the church will vanish as we see him more clearly.

And there is a corollary to this. If we feel hostile to any Christian people it is because we do not see Jesus and our relation to him as we ought. Our remedy is to seek closer union with him and better understanding of his ways.

CHAPTER V

THE AUTHORITY AND SCOPE OF PAUL'S PREACHING

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."—Eph. 3 : 8.

PAUL seems to have been a good deal concerned lest some one might be thinking, even if he did not say it: "Why, Paul, what brings you to us with so much assumption of wisdom? You are a born Jew. Your nation and your church authorities despise us Gentiles. What is your motive in coming to us with so much enthusiasm?" Paul, I say, seems to have had a vague fear that some one would think such thoughts. And so he inserted in his letter as a sort of parenthesis (3 : 2-13) the words I have chosen to consider at this time.

The words of the passage contain three elements:

I. The authority of Paul's teaching.

II. The limit of his commission.

III. A suggestion about the content of his message.

Of his authority it is natural that we should make some careful inquiry. Many men have said they had commissions from God to do things. Every age has

had its false prophets, and its deluded individuals, and its conceited characters. Ephesus was overrun with men of that sort. One writer says: "Superstition was rampant . . . it was preeminently the city of astrology, sorcery, incantations, . . and every form of magical imposture." (Farrar's "Paul," Vol. II, p. 16.) And so the mere fact that a man says he is commissioned from God to do or say anything may not be evidence sufficient to justify us in accepting his teaching. Paul, like any other man, must not skip the test of Matthew 7 : 20.

And our first test is the character of the man's record. If we take the book of Acts, and beginning at the thirteenth chapter read it through as a record, without trying to apply it to ourselves as a sermon, we shall get mightily interested in the man Paul.[1] We are impressed that no man would or could go through his experiences and persist in his mission as he did for the sake of notoriety or any other motive except to obey what he thought was an inner divine call to do so.

"To me was this grace given" tells the story of his own conviction about his duty. In Galatians he claims to be an apostle "not from man, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead" (1 : 1). "I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For I did not receive it from man nor was I

[1] See A. Deissman, "St. Paul," Chap. III.

taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 : 11, 12). "It was the good pleasure of God to reveal his Son in me that I might preach him among the Gentiles" (1 : 15, 16). Again he says, "We have the mind of Christ," and "we know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth" (1 Cor. 2 : 12, 13). Again, "I planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (1 Cor. 3 : 6). "According to the grace which was given to me I laid a foundation" (1 Cor. 3 : 10). "Let a man so account us as . . . stewards of the mysteries of Christ" (1 Cor. 4 : 1). This claim to a divine commission is so woven into all his teachings that to take it away leaves nothing of importance undisturbed.

And we are further convinced that he had an authority for his message by the fact that it accords with the moral teaching that is contained in the four histories of Jesus' teaching. We are utterly without record of how Paul preached to a congregation of men ignorant of the gospel. No reports of his sermons have come to us. We have only letters to the Christians. But so far as we can get any idea he taught the facts of Jesus' life and death in substantial agreement with our Gospel records. He laid a historical foundation. He says in Romans 1 : 3 that Jesus was born of the seed of David; in Galatians 3 : 1, that he had "set forth Jesus

Christ before their eyes openly crucified." And in Corinthians (1 Cor. 15 : 12-18) he insists that the bodily resurrection of Jesus is the very corner-stone of the Christian's hope. His letters are endeavors to teach the kind of life that men ought to live who have accepted that historical Jesus as their God-sent Saviour. And the strong testimony to the authoritative quality of his teaching is the consistent reasonable line of conduct and feeling that he deduces from the teaching of Jesus. At this late day, with all the light of investigation and microscopic penetration into the subjective side of his letters, no inharmonious ethical note has been found. It may not be possible for us to tell how he was so accurate in his development of the principles of Jesus; but that he was so accurate, and that no leading principle of Jesus was either twisted or left out is a stubborn fact.

And another evidence to his divine commission to preach to Gentiles is the fact that his gospel is adapted to them and has been accepted by them with great Christian results. If he is not in line with the divine will then he has outwitted that will; for it is unmistakably true that the Christianity that has won the Gentiles, and is winning them, is the Christianity that Paul preached. So we may accept his word at full value. He was given the grace to preach the unsearchable riches to Gentiles.

But if Paul was thus commissioned to preach to Gentiles—that is, to us all, for we are Gentiles—then

God is interested in our hearing the message. If the Spirit of God sent him through "perils of rivers, and perils of robbers, perils from his countrymen, perils from the Gentiles, perils in the city, perils in the wilderness, perils in the sea, perils among false brethren, in labor and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness" (2 Cor. 11 : 26, 27), then there is a divine desire that we accept the message. In view of this statement of the apostle we cannot be indifferent to his great endeavor.

But what was Paul's divinely given commission? "*To preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.*" No man that has read Paul's letters fails to see that he as much as Jesus was intensely interested in making the society of mankind to be holy and loving. He was interested in government (Rom. 13 : 1; 1 Tim. 2 : 1), and in the condition of women (Eph. 3 : 18 to 4 : 1), and in the education of children, and in the welfare of his countrymen. (Rom. 10 : 1, 2.) In caring for the poor (1 Cor. 16 : 1-4) no one could utter the clause of the Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come in earth as it is in heaven," more sincerely than Paul. And yet when he is summing up in crystallized form his own part in bringing that kingdom to reality, he says his divinely appointed business, his assigned part, was to preach Christ's unsearchable riches. That was the weapon he was to use. He was not commissioned as a polit-

ical agitator. He taught righteousness with no uncertain sound and no common courage. He rebuked lawlessness everywhere. But it was not his commission to upset governments by force, nor by revolution, but to "preach Christ" and to preach him to the Gentiles.

This gets expression in various places, but in none more forcibly than in Corinthians, where he says: "I determined not to know anything among you but Jesus Christ, and him crucified." This has been often minimized by careless explanation. It has been read as if he said, "I determined not to know anything but a crucified Christ." But that is not his word. *Nothing but Christ!* That is a great knowledge. It includes all about him from his life in a manger to his place at the right hand of God. It means his divine nature; his preexistent career; his boundless love; his wise administration of the church; his duty as judge of all the earth. It must have included the stories of his earthly deeds and teachings. *Nothing but Christ!* The more one thinks of it, the more immeasurable that knowledge appears. And then he adds, "*and him*"—this all-glorious Christ—I will not leave out the most wondrous of all the glorious story, "*him crucified.*" Tempted as I might be to conceal his death as a criminal along with real criminals, I will not let it be out of sight for a single occasion. The glory or the shame, whichever men may call it, I will never conceal.

And this resolution he faithfully kept. When he went to Antioch in Pisidia he said to the Jewish people, "We turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13 : 46). When he returned to Antioch in Syria and made his report of the first missionary journey, he "rehearsed all things that God had done with them, and that he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles" (Acts 14 : 27). In Athens, before the philosophers of that philosophical city where he might be tempted to take some other line of thought, he preached "Jesus and the resurrection," and that God had "appointed a day in which he would judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he had ordained, of which he had given assurance in that he had raised him from the dead" (Acts 17 : 31). In Ephesus at his first preaching "the name of the Lord was magnified" (Acts 19 : 17). When he returned to Jerusalem after many years of service in what we should call the foreign field, "He rehearsed one by one the things that God had wrought among the Gentiles through his ministry" (Acts 21 : 19). When, as a prisoner, he stood before Agrippa to defend himself, he said: "I testify to both small and great that Christ must suffer, and how he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles" (Acts 26 : 23). And after he was put in prison at Rome we read, he "abode two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and

teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus with all boldness" (Acts 28 : 30).

Such are the statements of the book of Acts, and when we examine his own writings, the same purpose is very plainly seen. This letter to the Ephesians gives in the first chapter, as we have seen in former studies, an inventory of what the Christian has. But they are all said to be received "in Christ." We are "chosen in him"; "foreordained unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ"; God's grace is "freely bestowed on us in the Beloved"; in Christ we "have our redemption"; God purposes to "gather together all things in Christ"; in Christ "we are sealed unto the day of redemption"; thus, as he stated in 1 : 3, we are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ."

And what is so prominent in this letter is equally so in Galatians. There he says: "If any man preach any other gospel, let him be reckoned a curse to you instead of a help." When he went up to Jerusalem he met the leaders, and they approved his doctrine. (2 : 6-9.) He writes, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law" (3 : 13); "Ye are all sons of God through faith in Jesus" (3 : 26); if they forget the gospel there is no rest for him "until Christ be formed again in them" (4 : 19); and if they lean upon the law "Christ profits them nothing" (5 : 2). In Romans the whole argument is to lead men to be trustful in Jesus. In Philippians he rejoices if only, "whether in pretense or in

truth, Christ is preached," and he bears trouble patiently if only "Christ is magnified in his body, whether it be by life or death." And he declares that "every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." In Colossians, Jesus is the "Son of God's love, in whom we have redemption; and he is the firstborn of creation, the head of the church, the firstborn from the dead, the one preeminent, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." In Thessalonians, Paul says we are to obtain our salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

This note persists in all his writing like the melody or motif in a piece of music. And he insists that he followed that course because he was divinely guided to do so. It was not his own way, but the divine way. It is still the divine way. The minister of the gospel is not to be a minister of law, nor a leader of sociology. He is not disinterested in these, but his special weapon is preaching the riches of Christ. Let him not be in the least ashamed of it. For the great need of mankind is what "Christ and him crucified" alone can furnish. It is not difficult to see what men ought to do. The difficulty is to get some power at work in them that will get them to do it. We know well enough what is right in most cases. We approve the good and leave it undone; we dislike the evil, and yet it clings to us. It is what Dr. John Watson called "a dynamic" that is needed. And Paul knew the

dynamic equal to the need. It was not a system of theology, nor a set of ceremonies, nor a new sociology. All these have their value. But it was the constraining power of a personal Saviour. No man is nearly all bad. Every man is almost good. There is a conflict going on, a struggle for right with the balance on the wrong side. It needs a certain kind of reenforcement to turn the tide of victory the right way. And that reenforcement comes in response to the faith that a great loving heart of an infinitely wise Saviour is in sympathy with us. That is what Paul taught. Jesus, he said, is the expression in human form of a divine love, and a readiness to help. And when any man gets that in his soul all the forces of his nature are quickened like the fields in spring, and begin to take on new life and beauty. *The unsearchable riches of Christ!* Not the beauties of his ethics—though they are without flaw; not the systematic basis of his teachings, nor the soundness of his underlying philosophy of life; but the *riches of Christ*—that son of Mary, who lived with men, and died for them, and now sitteth at the right hand of God watching over the souls of all that believe on him—that is what Paul preached, and that was his margin of power.

And the efficiency of his method has been manifested by the history of preaching. The great movements of human progress, and the great deliverance of society from its worst faults have come about more by the preaching of Christ than by any other

agency. We are not disposed to deny efficiency to other agencies, nor to say that all the church has to do is to preach a "simple gospel." It has a great deal more to do. But we say that the great results in human history have been accomplished by having at the bottom a knowledge of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. That knowledge has been the controller of the other forces and the inspirer of other agencies. It is generally acknowledged that in China the great changes that are now taking place are due to fifty years of preaching of the unsearchable riches of Christ by missionaries. It has been like leaven in meal. Henry Ward Beecher used to say that after he once caught a glimpse of the real Jesus he could not preach anything else. Men used to say of him: "Why go to hear him? He is a smart young man, but he has but one chord, and he plays that all the time. All he has got to say is about Christ."[1] But Mr. Beecher was a great contributor to the uplift of the morals of this country. Mr. Moody was noted for the singleness of his message. It was all about Christ. Sometimes such preachers have been called narrow, or men of one thought. It was so in Paul's time. The Greeks sought after wisdom and the Jews after signs, but Paul preached "Christ crucified" (1 Cor. 1 : 22), and was not ashamed of the gospel, for it was "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1 : 16). This commis-

[1] Beecher's address at his withdrawal from the Congregational Association in 1882.

sion of Paul's is well worthy our own consideration. We may not say that because he had that limited commission therefore every pastor is thus limited. There is a division of labor in the kingdom. And our commissions as well as our gifts may differ. But it is of great significance, that may not wisely be overlooked by us, that when the new kingdom of God—the Messianic kingdom—was to be started out on its course, the Lord himself said, "Go and preach the gospel." When he was telling his disciples about the experiences the kingdom would pass through, he said it would be like leaven in the meal. It would work by transformation, not by the upheaval of revolutions. Paul's preaching overturned Rome, and yet no preacher donned a military uniform or led a political revolt or encouraged a rebellion. I suppose if the truth were told the preachers did more than any other set of men to produce revolt and the overthrow of old institutions. But they did it by preaching the riches of Christ. We may not say that the example of the early church is binding on us now, but we may, and if we are wise we must, estimate the efficiency of their methods and learn what we can from them. And Paul's method was to know nothing but Christ and him crucified. Would he be likely to adhere to that if he were here now?

Our missionaries face the problem of methods continually. With a zeal that is heaven-born, a courage that is dauntless, they inquire how best

can they establish the kingdom among the nations. Some would begin with hospitals, some with public schools, some by subjugation and reducing to civil order, some by new sociology. We are not disposed to decide against the value of these, but we feel justified by history in saying that if Paul's method is not made fundamental the work will fail—" other foundation can no man lay than Jesus Christ."

CHAPTER VI

THE PREEMINENT MESSAGE OF THE CHURCH

"Unto me . . . was this grace given to preach . . . the unsearchable riches of Christ."—Eph. 3 : 8.

PAUL must have had a well-thought-out conception of the great qualities of God and of Jesus. He was not uncertain nor indefinite about Jesus' authority or wisdom. He had well-established ideas of what God does for us, in us, and with us. He also had his ideas of the part Christ Jesus has in our salvation. We know this because while no writing of his deals with a "system" of theology, yet all the allusions and fragmentary statements that come in his letters are in harmony with one another, which could not be true if his underlying thought had been chaotic or varying.

But while this is true Paul did not preach a theology. He says: "To preach (not the fathomless mysteries of Christ, but) the unsearchable riches of Christ."

Rev. John Watson, in his "Cure of Souls," says (p. 78): "There are those who can so deal with the sacrifice of the Lord as to make us think of a work, not a person; and others who so plead for almsgiving as to bring us face to face with him

who knew not where to lay his head." Doubtless Paul was one of this latter sort. We have no sermon of his given in any detail, but judging from allusions we may feel sure that what he says here describes his preaching. "*The riches of Christ*" were set forth; that was his great theme. But there is one modification which we must make if we seek the completest view of Paul's preaching. He always observes in his letters the preeminence of the Father. In this letter to the Ephesians he writes: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ" (1 : 3); then he goes on to specify some of these "spiritual blessings." He chose us in him (1 : 4), foreordained our sonship (1 : 5), made known to us the mystery of his will (1 : 9), we have a heritage "according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (1 : 11). When he records his daily prayer for them, it is that the God of our Lord give them a spirit of wisdom. (1 : 17.) When he would give them a measure of the power God is willing to exercise on their behalf, he says: "According to the working of his might . . . when he raised Christ from the dead," and made him to sit at his right hand. (1 : 20.) So through all his writings there runs this undercurrent of the supremacy of the Father.

But while no man can read Paul's letters with an open mind, unafraid, and escape the thought of

"God, the Father almighty," so also he cannot escape the complementary thought that Jesus Christ is the "way" to that Father, and the "truth" about him, and the giver of "life" before him.

But granting this modification, the riches of Jesus Christ exhaust Paul's language.

We shall find profit in taking a swift inventory of these riches as he saw them.

His riches of nature reach back into depths that are left unfathomed. He was "in the form of God." That is, our acquaintance starts at that point. That state of dignity and honor equal with God was his by right. Jesus himself alludes to it by saying, "The glory I had with thee before the world was" (John 17 : 5). Back of that Paul does not go. He knew, better than some since then, when the water was too deep for him. Had he ventured to write a creed, he would hardly have written the longer form of the so-called "Apostles' Creed." Had he been wording a prayer for his people, he would not have written, "Mary, mother of God." Probably when he thought about that preexistent state of Christ he said, as we may well say: "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God" (Rom. 11 : 33). He preached the riches, not the mysteries of Christ. And these riches of condescension and love are measured by the height of Christ's honor before he came. He was the one through whom all things were made; by him all things "hold together." He is appointed heir

of all things. To him every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess his authority. He is the "express image," that is, the exact miniature of God's character and nature; so Paul could say, He that knows Jesus knows God, and the future will not show us anything about God that has not been contained in Christ Jesus. He was the very effulgence of divine glory. He was to God what sunlight is to the sun. He was God manifest, not in stars, or flowers, but in the flesh. I can but wish and pray that in all our preaching and living this "glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" may be seen with increasing clearness; for upon that depends the true dynamic of our life.

And he was rich in the qualities of his human inheritance. He was "made in the likeness of men." He was "tempted in all points like as we are," and "touched with a feeling of sympathy." But in addition to that general human experience he was of the "seed of David." That is, he gathered into himself the best qualities of humanity. There is no nation whose history, taken as a whole, has been marked by so continuous and great excellence as the people of Israel. Up to the time of Christ that people marched at the head of the procession of peoples in their moral ideas, their religious conceptions, and their family life. Jesus came from the best part of that race—the middle class of pious Israel. His family was neither weakened in morals by the corruptions of wealth and position, nor

depressed in ambition by abject poverty. As in every country the health of the nation is found in the middle class, so then Joseph and Mary were among the best people. And what a family record they had! It is a most interesting study to follow up in the Bible the names that come in that record. It shows Jesus to have been related to the best of his nation's history. If there is anything of honor to come from family history, none had a longer line of noble ancestry than he.

He was rich in his mediatorial work. We may be sure that Paul preached everywhere as he said he did at Corinth. "I determined not to know anything among you but Christ and him crucified." And again, I preached the gospel which I also received, and which you received: that "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures." So in this letter he says: "In whom we have our redemption, even the forgiveness of our sins." So in Romans, when he sums up the whole way of peace with God, he says: "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3 : 24). "He bore our sins in his own body on the tree," said Peter; and Paul says, "Christ became a curse for us" (Gal. 3 : 13); "O foolish Galatians, . . before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly set forth crucified" (Gal. 3 : 1). It is true that he does not make his teachings into

dry formularies, but he made the Christ crucified central.

And he was rich in his mediatorial influence. It is by an appeal to his life and love that Paul moves the hearts of men for all sorts of activities. Among students of the Bible many have seen this influence so fully that they have denied all other value to the cross. They have said that the "work" of Jesus is to have, by his love, such a moral influence on us that we become reconciled. As the hymn says:

> I sink by dying love compelled
> And own thee conqueror.

It is not necessary to deny the other for the sake of seeing this. It is a great present-day work of Jesus to influence men for good. Oh, how many-sided and mighty-powered his influence is! A clear vision of Jesus will generally lift a man out of his meannesses and start him on a better road. Visions of Jesus are the inspiring influences that keep the courage of men along the whole Christian experience. *Unsearchable riches of holy influence!*

He was very rich in his practical wisdom. Sometimes we hear it said that preachers and churches are idealists, and lack adjustment to facts as they are. Well, perhaps we are. Most preachers who amount to anything more than superintendents of church activities, must be idealists in large measure. They must study their books and men and *ideas.* So they may lose touch with what we call affairs.

But be that as it may, Jesus, our pattern, was rich in *practical wisdom.* It is plain that Paul sought practical religion. His letters finish up with words to parents and children and masters and servants. He talked about churches and their various problems. But his great aim was to "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus," because he thought that if a man was truly in Christ he would become a practically good man.

Consider Jesus' counsel to Nicodemus. Unless a man be born from above he cannot be what he ought to be. Could anything go more directly and truly to the root of things than that? David said, "Create within me a clean heart." The proverb said, "Out of the heart are the issues of life." As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. If you had only one prayer for your son, would you not say, "Lord, give him a clean heart"?

Or, take the whole Sermon on the Mount, and see how it shows just how to make society enjoyable. Stand up for righteousness. Do your duties for divine approval. Ask for help of God. Build your house on facts, not professions. Judge doctrines by what fruit they bring.

Or consider the larger matter: He wants the world to become right. How is the way to secure it? Satan on the Mount of Temptation would get it by doing wrong. But he represented not only wickedness, but foolishness; "for the man who sins knowingly, not only sins, but blunders, for every

sin has in its own self the seeds of its own defeat." (Horace Greeley.) Jesus said, Go out and preach what I have taught you. Was that not the most effective thing to do? Where it has been done has not the world grown better? And where the world has failed is it not where the teaching of Jesus has not been preached? Is it not a fact that whenever a family, or a community, comes into a more submissive relation to Jesus' teaching, conditions always improve? Enmities lessen, mutual helpfulness increases. Folks quarrel less and help one another more. They are more patient with one another. They speak more carefully about one another.

In business, if a new instalment of true Christian obedience should arrive, it would give us a full pound's weight if we had not been getting it; men would be more careful to pay promptly, and a general condition of comfort would prevail. If Christian men on both sides were in charge of affairs the so-called "labor questions" would get quicker and happier settlement. Every year of our history adds to the testimony that for practical wisdom the teachings of Jesus cannot be excelled. They are justifying themselves continually, and men are saying, "Why didn't we see this wisdom sooner?"

He was rich in his character. Isn't it a remarkable fact that all the best traits that men anywhere have found reside in Jesus in full measure? We all value truthfulness, but he was flawless in truth.

We value kindness, but not a trace of unkindness is in him. We delight in a man who has the courage of his convictions; but Jesus sets us all an example. We respect the grace of forgiveness in others; but he taught and practised it fully. In the record we see him under many different circumstances. Among friends, and how friendly he is! With the sorrowing, and how he comforts them! He preaches to the listening crowds, and with what wisdom! And then we find him among enemies who watch every word to find fault. Not a look or tone escapes their sharp criticism. We find him in the presence of the governor, and on the cross; but in every place he says the right thing. Calm, fair, courageous, patient, plain-spoken! What an example of practical sense! Patience with others is a virtue, and how patient he was with men! Every virtue we can think of he possessed to the full measure. Think along any line of goodness, and there at the end of our thought is Jesus meeting in his own character our highest thought. Of him it was truly said, "He is altogether lovely."

He was rich in his wisdom as a teacher. How wonderful he was! It is said that the common people heard him gladly. That was because he knew how to teach. He was always teaching with his preaching. In our day we are hearing and reading much about the science of teaching. All the ideas that teachers have picked up by long experience are formulated, classified, and put into books

on pedagogy. And they are very helpful—sometimes. But it is a striking fact that if we take the Gospels as we have them, and apply these pedagogical tests that are found in our books, Jesus' teaching meets them all. Four great things are said to be the corner-stones of good teaching: (1) To impart knowledge of facts; (2) to awaken interest; (3) to present ideals; (4) to enlist the will. All good teachers must have these; and every discourse of Jesus bears evidence that he sought to do these very things. He is the Prince of teachers. One of our great teachers, the superintendent of schools in Philadelphia, in his book, "The Making of a Teacher," gives two chapters to pointing out this feature of Jesus' teaching ability. Rich in the knowledge of teaching! When President Ebenezer Dodge, of what is now Colgate University, died, Prof. Edward Judson spoke at the funeral. Among other things he said was this: "We students found that when we went to him with our problems he had thought all around them and all through them beforehand, so we had confidence in his answers." So it was with Jesus. He had thought the human problem all through. Preachers and teachers need not fear that in his answers any part of the case has been overlooked.

He was rich in his victory. Our Easter Day is the token of that. He was crucified, and died, and was buried. The soldiers were sure of it. The friends were sure of it. The grave was sealed.

The guard was appointed. But behold! the tomb is empty, and the voice of tenderness that they supposed was silent forever spoke again to Mary and the others.

> "Jesus hath broken the bars of the tomb!"
>
> The powers of death have done their worst,
> But Christ their legions hath dispersed.
>
> The Prince of hope with death hath striven;
> To cleanse the earth his blood was given;
> He rent the vail and opened heaven.

Now he has returned to the glory he had with the Father, and has sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high. Rich in his wondrous victory!

But more than all else, *he is rich in his present, active interest in mankind.* "He sitteth at the right hand" as the "head of all things to the church." That is, the mind of Jesus is now daily watching us and superintending our lives.

Such is an outline of the "unsearchable riches of Christ." It was the substance of Paul's message. It must be the substance of ours if we contribute our share in that "gathering together in one all things in Christ," which is the far-off but God-appointed destiny of our race.

CHAPTER VII

THE REASON WHY THINGS ARE AS THEY ARE

"To make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which for ages has been hid in God, who created all things, to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places might be made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."—Eph. 3 : 10.

ONE of our great problems is to harmonize our view of things as they are with our view of things as we think they ought to be. Nearly all men think that a Being of goodness and power made and rules the world. Such a belief underlies all our plans and reasonings. But we see much that does not harmonize with such an underlying belief. There are some philosophers who, because they cannot harmonize these conflicting views, cry out in despair:

> There is no good, there is no God,
> And faith is a heartless cheat
> That bares the back for the devil's rod
> And scatters thorns for the feet.

An English writer has said that he would be miserably ashamed of himself to have made a world so full of wretchedness as this one is. An aged

lawyer said to me when his daughter died, leaving a little babe to the awkward hands of its father: "If I were God, I think I could find a better way than to take a needed mother, and leave a semi-useless old man like me."

A mother told me that her little five-year-old boy was so full of questions which she could not answer, that she took him to Sunday-school. I asked her to give me a sample of his questions. She replied: "He asked me if God was good and powerful, and when I said, 'Yes,' he replied, 'Why doesn't he kill the devil and be done with it?'" That is a child's way of stating your problem. Men would not be so bald in the statement because they would hesitate to impugn the character of the Creator.

A savage Bushman, when told the gospel story by the missionary, replied, "Why have you not told us this before?"

And this is no modern problem. The writer of the Seventy-third Psalm said that when he saw the sorrows of the good and the prosperity of the wicked, he thought: "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency."

In later days the poet Milton began his immortal poem, "Paradise Lost," with this prayer to the Spirit of God:

> What in me is dark,
> Illumine. What is low, raise and support,
> That to the height of this great argument
> I may assert eternal providence
> And justify the ways of God to men.

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Everywhere the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. The philosopher and the stupidest man alike find trouble in explaining why a good God should have made a world so full of what, to us at least, seems to be evil, and that the remedy for it is so late in coming.

An English writer[1] points out six common disturbing elements in life: Imperfections in body, feeble mental power, hindrance by surroundings, occupations unsuited to our capacity, pains of various kinds, struggle for existence. We all know something about each of these.

And besides these, Paul had his own questions to answer. He must have heard men ask: "If your God is so gracious toward all the world, why has he not revealed himself to others? If he is so good, why has he been so long getting things done? If he is powerful, why does evil have so good success here?"

But Paul thought he had the key that unlocked the "mystery that for ages had been hid in God," as he expressed it. He was commissioned to give light on that mystery, and to make other intelligences than human ones—intelligences that have been puzzled as much as we about it—to make them know the manifold wisdom of God. He hoped to enable Christian men to rebuke the subtle slanders against God that rise at times from the trials of life like fatal miasmas from the dismal swamps of Florida, and to awaken

[1] W. W. Peyton, in "Contemporary Review," Sept., 1911.

in their place the song: "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out!" He thought he had the key that unlocks the gates of fear and lets in the light of hope. The gospel he was to preach, when it had been accepted and had wrought its proper work in men, would by its doctrines and its results acquit the Creator of the charges that troubled, perplexed souls sometimes make against him.

This is a very large claim, but it is justified. Milton said in writing his poem that he would "pursue things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme." But he was in error. Paul had undertaken to justify the ways of God to men a long time before Milton's time, and he did it much better than Milton did, both here in Ephesians and in Romans.

His words here imply that there is a good destiny for men, and that in time that destiny will be reached, and reached in such a way that all the created universe will see and say, "He doeth all things well."

That destiny is told us in several places. In Romans (8 : 22) he wrote that all "creation groaneth, waiting for the redemption"; for it will be "delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." To the Philippians (2 : 11) he wrote: "Every knee should bow . . . and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the

Father." In this letter (chap. 1), he says: It is the purpose of the Father to "gather into one all things in Christ." There is a promise of a universal defeat of wickedness. In some way, at some time, sin and sorrow will not only have disappeared, but they will have disappeared in such a way that all will say that God is wise and good.

The traveler from Scranton to Philadelphia on the Lackawanna road comes to a place where one can see away beyond him Delaware Water Gap. Some upheaval of nature cut a deep notch in the mountain ridge. It shows against the sky in marked outline. Through it the river flows out toward the sea. One does not think for the moment that his route will bring him there. He winds about among the mountains back and forth for an hour or more, and then finds himself gliding along close beside the river and slipping through a narrow opening to the other side of the mountains. So it is with our destiny. It lies far away. There are many turns and many grades, but we shall come at last not only to see it, but to be it. "It is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3 : 2). There is a promise that in the individual cases all things shall work together for good to them that love God. By some sort of spiritual alchemy he will bring good out of evil and light out of darkness so that which appears to contain only evil will be found freighted

with good. So far as Paul's teaching can do it, God is shown to be at heart nothing different from what we inwardly feel that he ought to be—both good and wise.

But Paul now opens to us another view of the case not so easy to understand, but more rich in its content than any we have heretofore seen. He says that the *wisdom of God is to be made known to others "through the church."* How is that?

Bible readers are familiar with the idea that intelligent beings other than men exist. Peter in his letter said that angels desired to know what manner of things were in mind when they learned about the coming of Christ. When they went to announce the birth of the Saviour they burst out in a common hymn: "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth to men of good will." These heavenly intelligences are learning some things in these days of our trials. To them is to be made known the manifold wisdom of God. Earth is an object-lesson for angels to consider. They are to learn it by looking on and seeing how God deals with the whole problem of our human life; learn it by seeing what he does in the church, by the effects of his gospel plan. We must not be disturbed by the fact that these great problems are talked about as if they were just mathematical problems to be worked out, and had no mystery in them. Paul only sketches the plan in bold lines that we may see it. The gist of his thought is, as Peter

wrote, that angels desire to look into these things (1 Peter 1 : 12), and in looking, they learn the wisdom of God. We learn from this passage that the right place to search for a knowledge of divine wisdom is in the facts of the Christian life. Christian experience is the book. We ourselves are God's letters of commendation—the certificates of his wisdom. If the gospel does not work material changes in the lives of its followers, if it does not uplift and help, then the wisdom of God is not manifest. If the gospel fails to make a good man of me and another of you, then so far as our case is known God's wisdom is folly. But if it does lift us; if in its manifold influences it elevates the tone of life for all that have it, then it shows the wisdom of the plan.

See how it works. We are cheered in trouble by the assurance of divine care. We are in a world of seeming heartlessness. In the plan of the world, interest in men is apparently wanting. We are subject to the action of social laws that toss us about like corks on the current of Niagara. At times we feel like nobodies. In opposition to this, Paul teaches us that we are not only somebodies, but we are the *heritage of God.* We are of great value to him and to his plans. That view, once seen, puts a new song in one's mouth and changes a hopeless hour into one of joy. For a man to walk abroad amidst the works of God in the heavens, or in the earth with its landscapes and seas and flowers, and

there think, "The author of all this personally cares for me," brings a sense of the worth of life, and the worthwhileness of living which scatters despair. The psalmist wrote:

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,
The moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;
What is man, that thou art mindful of him?
And the son of man, that thou visitest him?

One great aim of the Christian teaching is to impress this upon us. All things have been arranged "for the praise of his grace." That is, to make us feel how gracious he is. A man can endure when he knows that God cares. The psalmist wrote, "God is my refuge, of whom shall I be afraid?" And again:

If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
Even there shall thy hand lead me,
And thy right hand shall hold me.
If I say surely the darkness shall overwhelm me,
And the light about me shall be night;
Even there shall thy hand lead me,
But the night shineth as the day.

It is a pearl of great price to know the care of God. Paul prayed that they might come to "*know* the love of God that passeth knowledge." A sense of that love calms our fears in conflict. It gives courage in danger. It comforts in sorrow. It stirs all the best in us. It is not overstatement to say that if life does nothing but make us to know the

grace of God and usher us into the next world with hope it is not wasted. "This is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send" (John 17 : 3). And it is equally true that for a man to have no knowledge of God or to have an utterly wrong conception of him is to have life without any fulness. The greatest fountains of joy and comfort and hope and inspiration are as yet undiscovered by such a man.

But how are we to know the exceeding graciousness of God? We learn the grace of God through trials. Suppose there was no sin to be overcome, no pain to be borne, no danger to be faced, no displacements in life, no struggle for anything; suppose we had no aims that called for strenuous effort, and no sin that made us ashamed, and no ignorance that handicapped us, what could we know of the graciousness of God?

Suppose I have a friend to whom I wish to make a gift. But he is very rich. There is not a picture he admires but he has bought it for his drawing-room; not a rare flower that does not find a place in his garden or hothouse. The booksellers send him early copies of all new books. Jewels for his personal adornment are common as buttons. All that he wants he buys. What can I buy to show him my appreciation? The fact that he does not have a thing is evidence that he does not want it much. How can I by a gift make him realize how much I care for him? My grace to him cannot

make itself known until he has some need that I can supply. And I am not sure but that the rule works as certainly the other way. The sense of the grace of God can remain only so long as there is need to be supplied. If we needed nothing we should not pray. If we received nothing we should not be thankful. If we had no obligation we should not be obedient. The very sense of our dependence is the channel through which we learn God's grace. And it is this sense of his grace that binds us to him.

> Oh, to grace how great a debtor
> Daily I'm constrained to be!

We sinned and asked him for forgiveness, and he gave it. We were in moral struggle, and he helped us. We walked where the shadow of death chilled us, and he was with us with his rod and staff to comfort us. We mourned, and he gave us consolation. Indeed, the very alphabet by which we learned the story of his grace is made up of letters learned in the experiences of trouble or need or struggle.

Now this is what I would notice. *No philosopher of any age ever thought of a plan by which the sweetest things would come from the bitter things.* No one of us would have imagined that a man would get his best sense of his own worth, and the greatest inspiration for his life by reason of his imperfections and hindrances and ignorances and pains and sorrows. But those that get a clear per-

spective of this plan of God see that which acquits him of harshness or neglect in creating us as he did. And they learn to praise him for his far-seeing wisdom and his unmeasured goodness. Our complaints are smothered in the abundance of his grace.

And again, *in his plan trials perfect our characters.* We are to be made holy. That is a definite central part of his plan concerning us. "He hath chosen us in him that we should be holy." That is, we should have clean, pure, honorable characters. And what are the characteristics of holy men? They are not the masculine qualities only, but the gentler traits as well. Moral courage and conscientiousness and loyalty to friends—these are the stalk and branches. The delicate flowers are patience with the erring, sympathy with the sorrowing, gentleness with the froward. The beauty of our relations with others is due to tact in recognizing others' rights and promptness in granting them.

But how are these qualities cultivated? Can a man cultivate patience who has nothing to try him? How will loyalty to friends prosper if one is never tempted to desert? What sympathy will develop if there be no pain or sorrow?

A community where all the neighbors are on salaries, and these substantially secured; where they have no great sicknesses, and are not engaged in any common work that binds them together, is the hardest place to live and keep alive the best traits of the Christian life. Sympathy tends to become

atrophied. The art of saying kind and helpful things has a hard time to maintain itself. One's hands lose their cunning in gentle ministry, and his eyes dry up for want of tears. Were it not for some families of the poor into which one can go and be of some use, life would fall to the low grade of comfortable selfish existence.

The dearest friends and the warmest friendships are not produced under sunny skies and upon smooth seas of health and prosperity, but in the times when the "cold storms rack the worn cordage of the heart." There are many friendships born in the depths of sorrow that are worth their cost. The quality of moral courage can only grow where there is resistance to the right, and it must be fought for. Love of truth comes into prominence only where it meets the contrast of falsehood. Love of God comes only when love of other things competes with it for the loyalty of the heart. If he were to take away from each of us every virtue that has not come from oppositions of evil of some sort we should become what J. G. Holland called:

> Powerless pulpy souls
> That show a dimple for each touch of sin.

In art there is a background to bring out the colors and shadows, to make emphatic the light. And so in character-building there is a background of evil. Paul wrote the Corinthians (2 Cor. 12 : 9) that if his thorn in the flesh would make him better to

know the grace of God, he would glory in his infirmities.

And when we see how trials make proud-spirited women into saints of God, how sorrow melts the hearts of the heedless business man, how the delays of God in answering prayers make some men patient with him and with the world; when we hear the sweetest songs of trust from the valleys of sorrow and the most confident praise from the men that are in the fight for righteousness, then we say: "What human philosophy would have thought out that way to perfect in men and women the image of Jesus?" It was such views as these that made the prophet say: "My ways are not your ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways" (Isa. 55 : 8, 9).

Jesus wins by his wounds. And what a weapon is the cross to overcome the hostility of men to Jesus! David could slay Goliath with a sling and a stone. Solomon could subdue the Queen of Sheba with his magnificences. The United States may conquer a lot of simple-minded Filipinos by killing off the best of them; they may possibly awe the world into decency by an overmastering navy. But *Jesus wins by his wounds.* That way to get his honor is the divine invention. He may be said to have a copyright on it. On the mount of temptation Satan sought to substitute another easier way for Jesus to win. He said, Worship me, or Satisfy

the multitude with prodigies. But Jesus said, No! and went on toward the cross to *win by his wounds.*

Jesus unites by his cross. Another element of wisdom is manifest in the gospel plan. It seems to us that all God's reasoning creatures should lovingly honor him as one family. It does not seem to be right that enmities and jealousies and divisions and animosities should exist between the parts of his common family of men. It seems far from ideal that nations should have different aims and differing moral standards and different religions. They are of one blood and going to one destiny; why should they not be united? Paul says that it is the one far-off culmination that all shall be together in Christ. (Chap. 1 : 10.) But how are these national prejudices to be overcome? By what sort of providence will he unite the diverse elements? One might think of Alexander's way—conquer the world with his troops. But the world never in heart submitted to Alexander. And at his death his kingdom was quartered and soon went out of existence.

One might say, "Teach them a common theology." But no one is able to formulate a theology that all will accept. The Roman Catholic Church has tried that, with no success except bloody persecutions and eternal inner strife smouldering like the fires of volcanoes.

But Jesus said, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." And that has been the result. That humble man in a little Jewish province under a

foreign ruler became a nucleus. And what has come of it? To-day there are more people in earth—not to mention those that have gone on before to await the consummation—that honor Jesus and count his people brethren than any earthly king ever had as his followers. His people own his authority more loyally than the subjects of any other king ever own their ruler's authority. His people pay costlier tribute to him than was ever paid to any other ruler. His subjects listen for his word as they never do for any other word. There is a sense of solidarity among his people more complete than even races have in themselves. And it is growing with wondrous strides. One of our noted public men used to talk about "My policies," and measure things by their contribution to those "policies." The policies of Jesus are being advanced in world-wide circles. His ideals of righteousness and square dealing are coming into vogue in all nations. Lord Russell once said in the presence of the Bar Association of New York that he had hope that the Golden Rule would eventually be the rule of international law. The chief official of the islands of Chusan, off the coast of China, not long ago issued a proclamation, in which he said Christianity should be "gladly heard, greatly honored, and highly protected." The highest officials of China ask the Christian people to pray for them. The doors of all the nations are open to the work of the missionary of the cross. Now what wisdom it was that saw the way to melt

down national prejudices by the story of a *crucified Lord!* In the ancient days of our country—I say ancient because we have so far advanced that we cannot think easily that it was so recent—in 1853 Wendell Phillips said in Boston that the only way that the Negroes of this country would ever get their freedom would be by their own hands in conflict with their masters. But how different was the case. God's ways are not our ways. And so the way of God in gathering into one all nations is not our way, but above it as heaven is above earth. The Greeks asked for wisdom, and the Jews for signs, but Paul preached Christ crucified—to the Greeks foolishness, to the Jews a stumbling-block, but to them that are called the power of God and the wisdom of God. (1 Cor. 1 : 23.)

And all this complex providence is that the manifold wisdom and the boundless grace of God may be revealed to the universe.

CHAPTER VIII

THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT

"I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness, and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love, giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. . . But unto each one was the grace given according to the gift of Christ . . . and he gave some to be apostles and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for perfecting the saints unto the work . . . of building the body of Christ, until we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God." —Eph. 4 : 1-13.

In these active, progressive days we are all interested in what goes by the name of "church unity." For the past twenty-five years the trend of Christian thought and desire has been toward *unity*. In the Episcopal Church conferences have been held to promote it. Baptists and Free Baptists have already united in one missionary organization, and their churches recognize one another in perfect equality. In missionary fields the practice of "comity" is quite general, and logically compels

the recognition of members from all denominations on a common footing.

In 1910 the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States adopted the following resolution:

"WHEREAS, There is to-day among all Christian people a growing desire for the fulfilment of our Lord's prayer that all his disciples may be one; that the world may believe that God has sent him:

"*Resolved,* That a Joint Commission be appointed to bring about a conference for the consideration of questions touching Faith and Order, and that all Christian communities throughout the world that confess our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour be asked to unite with us in arranging for and conducting such a conference."

This movement has the hearty support of the bishops, and has a generous amount of funds for carrying on the work.

Besides these and many similar efforts, the spirit of friendliness has been cultivated by the Christian Endeavor societies, and by union evangelistic services.

Our apostle's letter shows us that neither the danger of disunity, nor the endeavors to prevent it, are modern. The German poet, Goethe, said, "Men change, but man remains the same." This is true in churches. The same roots of evil appear in every

generation. Each new set of initiates into the Christian church has to run the gauntlet of the same tendencies. And it is not confined to the churches. Public men have the same experiences. In Isaiah's time they justified the wicked for a bribe, and took away the righteousness of the righteous from him. In Amos' time they swallowed up the needy, and caused the poor of the land to fail. They begrudged the working man his Sabbath; they made the bushel small and the shekel large; and sold the refuse of the wheat for good grain. There are no really new sins or new virtues. If a man wanted to do it, he could become an expert in wickedness by studying the sins recorded in the Bible history.

They say that if you dig a well in the country, thistles will spring out of the clay that comes from twenty feet below the ground—seeds are there. And so the seeds of this kind of disunity are in the soil of human nature, and need to be uprooted. It is for this reason that Paul's words to a church far away and long since, have value to us. The tendencies of human nature remain the same. He did not find any such trouble as denominational disunity, for denominations had not yet begun. It was not trouble between churches, but trouble in churches. He found in the churches various elements of disunity. In chapter two, as we have seen in former studies, the cause was racial prejudice, and he there showed how the "middle wall of partition" is now

broken down. But there was trouble growing out of jealousies between members because one member had "gifts," or, as we should call them, "talents," that another had not. This showed itself in heartburnings and complaints. Some said, as we see in 1 Corinthians 12: "Well, if I am not able to prophesy, I am not a real member of Christ." Another would say: "If you were as much honored as I, you could do what I do." And still others moved by envy would criticize the man that had the "gift." We are not strangers to that kind of disunity.

So let us see by what sort of instruction Paul dealt with the case in Ephesus.

I. He points us to the great vital blessings in which we all share alike. "*There is one body*"—that was a favorite figure with Paul. His thought seems to be the church is the organization by which the Spirit of God makes itself manifest in the world. Our spirit may have kind desires toward our fellow men, but suppose a man has no voice to express his affection, and no eyes to reveal his feelings, and no hands to work kindly service, and no feet to take him to his friend, what good comes from his spirit's intentions? He must have a body to give his spirit expression. So the church is the organization through which God makes his kind intentions toward men known. And Paul says there is only "one body." We all are members of that company through which he shows his love. The President of the United States and his chauffeur, if they are

Christians, have common rank in that particular. The wealthy woman and her maid meet together. When the church meets, they both come; when the church is honored, they both share in it. If it is dishonored, they bear the shame.

And we have "*one hope of our calling.*" There is no honor involved in the Christian hope that does not avail for every member. Will Mr. A—— have the care of God in his Christian journey? So will Mr. B——. Is God working in Mr. A—— to overcome his faults? So is he in Mr. B——. Is there a glorious resurrection for one? So there is for the other. *One hope of our calling!*

"*One Lord*"—and that is the Lord Jesus.

"*One faith*"—the essence of faith is the same in all the members. You may have different opinions and different theologies and different explanations of many problems, but your faith is the old-fashioned article. Eve did not rock Abel in a cradle, nor swing him in a hammock. She did not sing to him as all New England sings to its babies:

> Hush, my dear, lie still and slumber,
> Holy angels guard thy bed,
> Heavenly blessings without number
> Gently falling round thy head.

But she loved him just as you love your babe. Her heart, when she looked at him, felt just as yours does when you look at your child. Love remains the same. So our faith is identical with Abraham's.

That eleventh chapter of Hebrews is a wonderful chapter in many ways. And one of its wonders is the string of folks it talks about. Here is Abel bringing his sacrifice, and Enoch walking with God, and Noah preaching to the people and overseeing the building of the ark. Then comes Abraham, leaving his country and its growing idolatry to go out where his God would lead him; and Isaac, wonderingly climbing the mountain to be offered up; and Moses, leaving the pleasures of sin to cast in his lot with the people of God; then Gideon, daring to chop down the groves his neighbors worshiped in; and David going out to meet Goliath. All these had the same old-fashioned faith. We all have the same kind if we have any, for there is only one faith. Some have more of it, others less, but it is all the same kind.

But lest we should fail to see clearly what the aim is, let me state it more fully. There are three parts to it, all twisted together like the strands in a cord. "Unity of THE faith." This implies first some formulated conception of the great doctrines of the Christian religion. "The faith" does not here, as in many places, mean the mere attitude of trust in God, whatever he may be or require. Paul means, when he says we are "justified by faith," that we have an obedient and trustful attitude toward God as he has been made known to us, and on that ground we are justified. But when he says "the faith," he has some definiteness of

doctrine in mind. "Unity of the faith" must mean a common idea of what faith is and of the place that faith has in our salvation, and that Christ has in our faith. Some men think of their own goodness as a part of the foundation of their justification, and the grace of God as the other part. Faith only supplements their own works. They are partly paid for their goodness, and partly they are the recipients of heavenly charity. But "the faith" holds heavenly charity as the sole foundation. So far as being accepted with God is concerned, it is all "of faith" "through grace." Unless brethren have a common idea about that, they will work differently, and rejoice differently, and lack harmony. They do not have unity that belongs to "the faith."

And again, "the faith" is that trust in God that arises from a knowledge of Jesus. Abraham had faith, but he did not have "the faith" that Paul writes about here. "The faith" trusts God as he is revealed to us through Jesus. It is "the glory of God in the face of Jesus" that has won men to that kind of faith. And in proportion as men see that glory they will have "the faith."

For this reason there must be teachers of "the faith," who by wise and patient endeavor will lead all into the right ideas, and thus into the right faith.

The second part is the "*knowledge of the Son of God.*" The church cannot work up to its full efficiency while there is an ignorance about Jesus.

It would not be an ideal condition if some of the members thought Jesus was only the best man that ever lived, while others thought he was the very Son of God. Nor would it work for good to have some think he died for our sins, and others think his death was wholly due to his plainness of speech to a hard-hearted generation; to have some think him a good example to follow, and others think him a "ransom" for us. I think it quite possible for persons to hold any of these views, and be very loyal disciples of Jesus. But a church made up of all such disciples would not be ideal. It would be better if it had the "unity of the knowledge of the Son of God." Then its work would have a homogeneousness that is desirable. No energy would be wasted in competition of ideas. But to have this unity there must be "prophets and evangelists, pastors and teachers," to instruct.

And the third element of this unity is the "*unity of the Spirit.*" That is, a common disposition of peaceableness and mutual forbearance. It was this feature of unity which Jesus had in mind when he prayed that his apostles might all be one, even as he and his Father were one. It was this that characterized the early church when it was said of them that they were all of "one mind." And it was this that the apostle meant when he wrote, "Be of the same mind one toward another." And that "one mind" is described in Philippians as "that mind which was in Christ Jesus."

This kind of unity—the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, and of the Spirit—is the special need of the church in all ages. It never has been complete, it has never been maintained at all without difficulty. But it is to be continually cultivated. Our text says walk worthy of your calling, "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit." "Endeavoring"—giving diligence—that means to study the grounds of unity and the need of unity. And it means making personal sacrifices of pride and surrender of ambitions, and assuming other folks' burdens for the sake of it.

"*And one baptism.*" Some folks think this is a proof-text for the Baptists. Well, it is in one way. But Paul was not discussing the form of a ceremony. In his days the question had not arisen. No one thought *baptism* anything but immersion. But what he was saying was that the blessing of baptism was alike to them all. The same conditions, the same obligations, the same symbolism.

"*And one God and father of all, who is over all, and in all, and through all.*"

Oh, what a galaxy of blessings common to every member of that church—to every member of every church! In the great vital things all alike. Equality there in abundance! Holy communism! Divine socialism!

II. Paul's second thought is, The church is not simply a passive company, receiving all and doing nothing. It has a work to do of two kinds. One

is its missionary work. "Disciple all nations" was the commission. But the other work was in the church. He writes that something was to be done to equip the church for efficiency in building up itself until all should come to a mature man—that is, the Christian life and character is to be cultivated.

I fear that this part of the work is overshadowed by the other part. We often see in our papers the statement that a church has "built a parsonage," or "burned a mortgage," or "increased the salary," or "met the budget." The associational statistics tell us how many have been added by profession, and how many have been received by letter. I would not be understood as reflecting upon such work, but only as saying that there is a work more fundamental—and I say it deliberately because from it the other will grow more important—the work of perfecting the individual character of the members.

There must be organization for this task if the church is to accomplish much. There cannot be any great efficiency in a mere congregation. A mob, no matter how well-meaning, cannot do much but destroy things. It has no constructive force. A church of the best kind of saints will do very little in any country unless there is a division of labor, and some sort of orderly arrangement of its activities. Those denominations that have failed to organize their forces have lost efficiency. For example, the Friends, who have the very essence

of personal faith, but how feeble they are as a people! The Roman Catholic Church has very little of the personal faith, and yet by their organization what efficiency they have! In between those extremes are various denominations, some with little, others with more organization. It is always desirable. And so Paul points out that the Lord had given some to be apostles, and some prophets, and some pastors and teachers. We now have minor differences. Some are preachers. That is their calling—let them magnify it thankfully. Some can sing. Singing is good—if it is the right kind. It prepares the soil for the word; it soothes; it calms; it awakens holy memories; it echoes in our hearts after we go home from church. Some have the gift of teaching the young. Some have a social gift. Some have the gift of greeting strangers. All these various abilities are the result of our Lord's superintendence of the church. But says Paul—and this is important—these various "gifts" are not distributed, or apportioned without grace to perform them, but "*unto each one of us was given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*" That is, if the gift of Christ is to teach, he will give us grace to teach. If we are to minister to the sick, he will give us grace to do it. If a man is called to be a pastor, he will have help to do it. A man called to sing is not promised grace to preach, and some preachers have never received grace to sing.

But the more important part of this teaching is that the distribution of tasks and the assignment of duties are not made to satisfy men's ambitions. We sometimes hear it said that offices in the church should be passed around—men take turns. But that is not Paul's idea. Gifts are not complimentary honors, like votes in political conventions. They are weighty responsibilities. And they are assigned on an entirely different basis from compliment or personal vanity. Not given as rewards for work done, but given because of work to be done.

The principle of distribution is this: *For the perfecting of the Christians, for the work of building up the church.* The church is to be built up just as a body is built up, all parts growing together. A child does not grow his legs this year, and his hands next year, and his head the next, but he grows all over and all through him all the time. That is the way the church is to be built up—all its members, all the time, in all the requirements of the Christian life. And these gifts are assigned with reference to that purpose—that it may be fully equipped, fully provided with what is needed for its own upbuilding in love. This implies that some churches need a large committee to care for the poor; others have no poor, and do not need a committee. Some need an evangelist, others do not. Plain, prayerful common sense must determine the kind of organization for each. But it must be suited to the upbuilding.

If the church were a hospital it would need surgeons and nurses. If it were governing the world it would need police and tax-collectors. But the upbuilding here is "until we all come to the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God," unto full-grown men and women. That is the dominant aim of our Lord in all our church organization—to bring the whole church to the unity of the faith, the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. That is, to build the church in a peaceful unity, as the Spirit of God both creates and approves. And as a tree is all the while active to produce fruit, and fruit dominates all the roots and branches, so the desire for the unity of the Spirit should be allowed to control all its activities.

CHAPTER IX

THE CHURCH AN ORGANISM

"Speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into him who is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love."—Eph. 4 : 15, 16.

EVERY cause that wins men's support to any great extent has some sort of organized effort to propagate its principles. We see this especially exemplified in the field of politics. Nothing can be undertaken with hope of success unless there is an organization to present the case. Information must be given, the indifferent must be interested, the errors of the other party must be refuted. The fact that an organization may become a "machine," or a "steam roller"—to use the political word—and may use improper means, does not make it less necessary to have an organization. The tariff question, the temperance question, the trust question, the question of what are called clean politics, must have organized effort.

The same is true about religion. We all came into the world empty-headed. What we know at

any time in life is what we have learned. The truths of religion are not spontaneously generated in our minds, they must be taught us. We are "begotten again by the word of truth," and to have it well taught there must be an organization to do it. It must be somebody's business, and the somebodies must be qualified in some way for their work.

So the old Jewish church had its organization. Moses, who had been brought up at the court of Egypt, which was a highly organized nation, did not set out to lead a nation into independent life and prosperity without having an organization to teach the things of God. There was the tabernacle, and the priests who made it their business to care for it, the sacrifices and the ritual, the hymns of praise and the didactic hymns that kept fresh the memory of the Lord's guiding providences.

So a church, that is, not a mere crowd of folks but an organized body of people, has always been on hand making it its business to teach the things of God. One has to compare the work of Doctor Talmage, a great pulpiteer but no organizer, with Doctor Behrends, who had both the pulpit and organizing gift. Mr. Talmage's church disbanded in a few weeks after he left them; Doctor Behrend's has been a virile force all the time since he died, calling to its leadership Mr. Cadman, who has not only pulpit power, but also a great genius and successful experience in organizing Christian work.

In some places the organization has been very complex and strong, like the Roman Catholic; and at other places there have been only independent congregations with the simplest organism. But organization has always come into being as soon as a few men united to propagate a doctrine. The "nature of things" provides its own tools. Given a people like the Wesleyan Methodists, or the Salvation Army, whose dominating purpose is to evangelize, and they will grow their own agencies for doing it. If education is the main purpose, schools will come up as naturally as blossoms come of fruit trees. The Salvation Army, of one hundred thousand, gathering an income of more than half a million a week, having eighty-two periodicals, and great numbers of homes and refuges for men and women, carries its messages to nearly every nation, and it was organized under one man, him who was rightly called the "benevolent despot." The Czar of Russia might envy the autocratic authority of Mr. Booth. But the work could not be done in any other way.

It therefore follows that the institution or organization assumes a great importance. The men who have it on their hands get to thinking that the organization is the main thing, and before any one intends it men are working for the church as an organization and overlooking the purpose for which it exists. Then there grows up an opposition from those who see only the purpose of the church

and overlook the necessity for its organization. They are like men who should say: "Oh, fie on your agricultural schools, and your spraying-machines, and your pruning-hooks. We want grapes, luscious grapes, lots of them."

So in the Old Testament times some of the prophets preached: "Away with your incense and sacrifices. They are an abomination. Cease to do evil and learn to do well. Put away your evil from before our eyes, wash you and make you clean. Then you shall eat the good of the land" (Isa. 1). But Malachi, feeling the need of public worship, said: "Ye have been robbing God in offerings; come to the temple; bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, and see if I will not pour you out a blessing until there is not room to receive it." In all history a sort of mutual antagonism has always been impending, if it did not actually break out, between the "organization" and the "independents"; between those that believe in what we call "team work" and those that emphasize "individual liberty of action."

In this church at Ephesus the question was not quite the same as among the ancient prophets, nor exactly as in our day, but it had a similar root. Here they were envious of one another because of the different parts that they had in the organization. So we get Paul's discussion of the case, which contains some good words for our day. He had begun by saying that in great things there is no

partiality shown to any one by the Father. We Christians have but one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all. As all the children of a proper family share alike in the love and care of the parents, so all Christians are of the household of God. (See 2 : 19.)

But when it comes to organization, he says the church is like the body of a man. It has its various parts, and they have various functions, but they are all parts of the same body. (See 1 Cor. 12 : 12-30.) But these parts were designed by the Lord. He planned to give us two feet and not four, to give us five fingers and not six. We must walk and not fly, because he so planned it. In like wisdom and authority he gave some to be apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, for perfecting the church, to do a helpful service in building up the body of Christ, till we come to unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God.

But now in this latter part of the chapter he considers what we might call the companion of organization. Or we may say he considers the church as an organism. The difference is this: In our organization some outside authority is assigning the parts and the tasks for each. He says to one, "You do this"; and to another, "You do that." But in our organism the parts do their proper duties by an informing spirit—as in the flowers the stalk, leaves, buds do their own part automatically. A regiment

has its organization—a colonel, the captains, lieutenants, corporals, privates; but for full efficiency there must be what is called *esprit de corps,* that makes every man seek to do the unassigned things wisely and bravely.

So the church, considered as an organism, is actuated by a common spirit that works spontaneously toward the true aim of the Christ.

But as an organism the aim of the church is to *build itself up in love.* That is not the same as building up in numbers. Numbers are important. Would that we had twice as many as we have. But if a church should double its numbers and halve its loving spirit, it would weaken rather than help the cause. And if a church was halved in numbers and doubled in the spirit of love, it would accomplish more than with the whole number.

And it is *not to build up in wealth.* Money is important. I would that all the members were so well off that they would be freed from anxiety, and be able to help others that are in need. But wealth is not the aim of the church.

And it is *not culture,* that is, intellectual culture. The cause needs cultivated men and women, but one may be very well cultured in soul and not be learned.

And it is *not to build itself up as a political power.* We hear and read much of late about what the church ought to do in the way of legislating for reforms. One would think the church owned the legislatures. But the church cannot do its work as

a political party. Its members ought to be in the right party and be active there, but as a church we have no adaptation for that kind of work. The Roman Catholic Church, which always gets its fingers into politics, has made a failure in that line. Every country on the globe where that church has meddled with politics has disfranchised the church. The South American countries, where the Catholic Church had full sway for centuries, nearly every one of them in a reform movement separated the Church from the State. They did not and do not condemn the Catholic religion, but only the meddling by the church with politics and government.

The church is not a business corporation. Our State laws have provision for "corporations not for profit." That is the kind of corporation the church is. Sometimes churches have undertaken to be business concerns. One that I knew of was running a shirt factory to furnish work for the members. This was a laudable purpose, but a poor method. The church is not organized for that kind of activity. Organ music cannot come from a jews-harp.

And the church is not a sociological club. It is not organized to care for musical teaching, or farmers' institutes, or library management, or nurseries for working-women's children.

It is organized for the "*building up of itself in love.*" That is, for calling out in all its members the great dominating quality, of which the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians tells so beautifully:

"Love suffereth long and is kind. Love envieth not. Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things. Love never faileth."

To "build up" the members and all the community in that is the special ministry of the church. That is its "profession." It is an expert in that line. We are to keep that in mind as the aim of our church work. Any success in any direction that does not do that is not success, but failure. Great congregations are good, desirable, useful. But if they are not built up in love, that is, if their coming together does not create among them a helpful spirit, the ministry of the church has failed.

And the method of securing this aim is said to be, "Speaking the truth in love." We have no good equivalent word for the Greek used here. Some have translated by "truthing it in love." Others read it, "adhering to the truth." We shall not be far from the idea if we say, "living the truth." Truth is not a mere statement. Truth is what Jesus meant when he said, "I am the truth." It is a life in which God's ideas are incarnated. And any expression of the divine idea is "speaking the truth." We are to "live out the truth in love." In the family, in the office, in the shop, in all relations of life to be regulated by a loving spirit. In that way we build up the church in love. In that way we grow up into Christ.

The mature Christian is satisfied with Jesus. And as that state of mind and heart increases in us the church organization works more smoothly. We cannot too clearly realize the splendid efficiency of this for accomplishing the mission of the church. We might think that if we can enforce the discipline of the church, or agree upon certain rules, or get into one great organization, or have one liturgy, that it will best promote the aim of the church. But experience shows us that so far as regulating our kindly intercourse with each other it comes best when every man tries to be in touch with Jesus. It is a striking fact in history that when the Bible was given to the people in Germany and in England, they came without conference with one another to a very great uniformity of morals and theology. The conductors of a great railroad each and all consult the standard clock. They do not get their time from one another, but from the head timepiece. And thus through the many hours and places harmony and safety prevail. So when we grow up into Christ as our head, that is, as we come to take him as our pattern and helper, we come to think alike about the common duties of kindness and honor and integrity. Ideas about the policy of work may differ, but ideas of right come to about the same standard.

What is the next step in Paul's thought? "*Compacted by that which every joint supplieth.*" (I am following the Common version here because, while the translation is difficult, the Common version is, on

the whole, more understandable.) For the sake of comparison I give the leading versions. "The Standard" reads: "From whom all the body, fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love."

"The Twentieth Century" reads: "From whom the whole body closely joined and knit together by the contact of every part with the source of its life derives its power to grow, in proportion to the vigor of each individual part; and so is being built up in a spirit of love."

Weymouth's "Modern Speech" reads: "Dependent on Christ the whole body—the various parts closely fitting and firmly adhering to one another—grows by the aid of every contributory link with power proportional to the need of each individual part, so as to build itself up in a spirit of love."

Paul has in mind as the basis of his extended metaphor the body of a man full of health and physical vigor. He seems to see in imagination one of the fine physical men of the arena, having muscles knit firmly, limbs moving freely, vigor in every pulse-beat, perfectly adapted to his duties. And this man supplies the framework of Paul's language. The church is the body of Christ. All its parts are knit together, and as a whole it has its strength, not as the result of one part, or of two parts, but compacted by that which every joint supplieth. If some

part were damaged, or paralyzed, or neglected, the body as a whole would be damaged in its working force and efficiency. My father by an accident lost his little finger on the left hand. He used to say he never knew that a little finger was of any use until he lost it.

Paul asserts what we all assent to, that all the members of the body are needed. In the church this is well worth our attention. "Compacted by that which every joint supplieth." Every member of the church has a useful function in this building up of the church in love. And in proportion as each one works effectively will the church be a strong and healthy church.

There are two directions in which error is liable to creep in. First, members are liable to think that their conduct and spirit, because they occupy no prominent position, is of little importance. All agree that the minister's conduct is weighty in compacting the church, and the deacons', and the trustees', and the teachers'. They are like cities set on a hill whose light cannot be hid. But others are not greatly important. Paul, however, says "every joint."

The least conspicuous member of the church strengthens and helps to build up the church in love when he is in touch with Jesus. I would not belittle the splendid helpfulness of prominent people in the churches, but here we are not discussing the building up of the church in numbers or

social standing, but the building up of it in love. And in this the least prominent sometimes contribute most. Let me tell you what I mean in the language of the concrete case.

I think I have some experience to justify what I say. My first pastorate was in a country church. It was a blessed little company. For such churches we are constantly thankful. Then I went for about seven years to Cincinnati, to a small church, but one in which all were well-off. Only one family of poor in it. Then to Toledo, to a church down-town, with the great intermediate element in abundance. Then to Yonkers for twelve years, where we had millionaires at one end and many factory people at the other. And in each of these churches we had wealthy men. And I bear my testimony that no more loving members were there than they were. They were in the prayer-meeting, and they were cordial. The women dressed plainly. They did not think of the church as the place where they were to show their finery. They did not by dress make it difficult for the poorer people to come. I have no sympathy with the campaign of envy that has swept over our country for the past few years against men of property. Wealth does not make Christians, but Christian men can be wealthy and do great good with their money. I have had no better helpers than wealthy men.

But in each of these churches we had very poor men. And I bear my testimony to their usefulness

too. My first lessons in the duty of giving proportionally to Christian work came from an English tailor. He made a very close living, cutting and making the clothes for the villagers. He used to lay aside ten per cent of his earnings as a fund for the mission work of the kingdom. He sometimes borrowed of the fund, but he said he always paid interest on it.

There was another man there, an old man who had a bedridden wife. He used to care for her himself. He cooked his own meals and hers. He made his living by sawing wood and doing chores for the neighbors. I learned that he was paying ten cents a month toward my salary. I was ashamed to take it. I said to the treasurer, "It will burn a hole in my pocket." But he said: "No, the old man would feel hurt if you refused it. He comes in here the first week in the month and gives me ten cents, his first earnings in the month. He enjoys it." That man taught us all what it is to love the church, and to be manly about it.

In another church we had a poor man—poor in money but rich in character. He was an engineer, with five children. But they were always in church and in the family pew. That was many years ago. Now the children are married, and with wives and children all come to church, about fifteen in all. That man was one of the "joints." That church knew what it is to be strengthened by what each "joint supplies."

And in another church, where I now live, I have noticed an Englishman who loved the word. He was always in his place. He had a kind word that made his poverty to be overlooked. He went up and down the aisle, and left the fragrance of a godly memory wherever he went.

The church is always "compacted by that which every joint supplieth," and weakened when a joint fails to work according to its due measure.

In Cincinnati there was a German woman, not a member of my own church, but a Lutheran. She was poor, aged, bedridden with rheumatism. With her daughter she lived in one room. The daughter supported both by work in some store. After getting their breakfast the daughter used to put the lunch for her mother on the stand at the head of the bed, where her mother could reach it, and then leave her until evening. That old woman had great faith in God. She lived "under the shadow of his wing." She spoke not the common language of Cincinnati, but of the kingdom of heaven. She was visited by women of health and wealth and culture, partly to comfort her, but they used to say it was a blessing to go and see Mrs. Armbruster. They brought away more than they took to her. She was a supply to their need. Through her the church was built up in love.

In the city of Toledo lived a similar case, only the woman was a French Catholic. (Oh, how low the fences are between the denominations when

Christ appears among them!) My wife used to visit her, and she said it was a help to herself to visit that cheerful, bedridden, poverty-smitten sister in the Lord.

In Chester we had—for all the Christians had a share in her—a woman of culture and wealth smitten with a long-drawn-out painful malady. But she was so patient, so uncomplaining, so thoughtful of others that she was called a "perpetual sermon."

That is what Paul meant by "compacted by that which every joint supplieth." "Every joint!" The poor, the rich, the strong, the weak, the great, the small, Gladstone and his butler, President Wilson and his doorkeeper. "Every joint" has its part in the body; each one something to do in giving compactness and vigor to the church.

"*According to the effectual working in the measure of every part.*" That is, when every joint does its appropriate work well. If some little joint objects to doing its part, the whole may suffer. A lame ankle may cripple the man. A deaf ear, or a blind eye may almost make a man useless. So a big Christian, or a little one, may cause a church to limp or almost cripple it. The "effectual working" of every part is important.

And so we are turned back in our thought to see how this effectual working is to be maintained. It reads: "*Grow up into him in all things, from whom the whole body . . . maketh increase of itself in love.*" That is, in proportion as we are closely

associated with him we make our various contributions to the growth of the church in love.

We have all heard of men whose life is an irritation to the church where they live. They are like the sand that gets in the machinery. They say sharp things, they criticize others unsparingly, they get easily hurt, and they hold their griefs a long time; or they hold back their support when things are being done. Such people are not in touch with Jesus very much, they have not contact with the "supply," and in proportion as they do these things they do not "compact," but rather disintegrate the church, and it does not grow in love; or, if it does, it is in spite of them. No one is without his influence for good or bad in this matter.

It is to me one of the sweetest things about our Lord's way of doing things that the humblest of his people are sometimes chosen for the most delicate and important ministries. Summing up the thought of the chapter then, we see that all Christians are alike in the great mercies of God. But various ministries are given us, all looking toward the building up of the church in love. And in this work each one has some special contribution to make. The social station is not the regulator of our usefulness, each one contributes toward the great end, and contributes in proportion to his own close relations with Jesus.

CHAPTER X

THE PERFECTING OF SELF

"And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit; speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs; making melody with your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ."—Eph. 5 : 18-20.

THIS chapter deals with a subject about which whole libraries of books have been written, and much of which had better been left unwritten. The fundamental error from which the others have grown is the mistaken idea that the phrase "filled with the Spirit," as used here, means the same that it did in Acts 4 : 8. But there is quite a difference in meaning, a difference also in the Greek words used. In Acts, as generally in Luke's writing, the phrase means to be so overmastered by the Spirit of God that it is not the man, but the Spirit that speaks. The speaker is like the captain of a ship when the pilot comes aboard. He goes below, and the pilot takes the ship into port. One of our Home Mission secretaries, in visiting the churches of his district, went to the home of the Indian pastor of

an Indian church. He found the family all away except a little boy. So he told the boy who he was, and asked to be allowed to remain until the family returned. The boy was full of questions, and took the opportunity to settle some queries of his own mind. He had gotten the idea that ministers spoke by inspiration, so he asked the secretary if he "could tell when it was coming on." Some people have the idea that it "comes on." And, indeed, that was the promise of Jesus to his disciples when they were brought before kings and governors. (Mark 13 : 11.) But it is, as we shall see, a different idea that has place in this teaching of Paul. Let us study it independently of any prepossessions gained from Luke's writings.

We have an exhortation contained in two pictures suggested by the apostle's words.

"*Be not drunken with wine.*" What picture does that suggest? It is a company met together for what they call a "good time." They are seeking what they call pleasure, and are drinking wine to obtain it; filling up their cup of enjoyment. Memory tells us of the songs we have heard from such occasions. Perhaps some of us have sung that kind of songs and had that kind of pleasure. That is the scene Paul had in his mind when he wrote this part of his letter. It is no modern invention. It was common all over the Roman Empire. It went back to the time when Isaiah wrote about "them that rise up early that they may follow strong drink,

and tarry late into the night until wine inflame them." They sung what was not good. They used the name of God as they should not use it. The evil was so common as to give occasion for the proverb:

> Look not thou upon the wine when it is red,
> When it sparkleth in the cup,
> When it goeth down smoothly:
> At the last it biteth like a serpent,
> And stingeth like an adder.
> Thine eyes shall behold strange things,
> And thine heart shall utter perverse things.
>
> —Prov. 23 : 31-33.

And not less clear though in less figurative language is the condemnation of drunkenness in the New Testament. Paul says no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of heaven.

And the result of these drinking-parties is, in the old translation, called "excess"—"wherein is excess." In the "Standard" version the reading is, "wherein is riot." In the "Twentieth Century" it is translated, "leads to profligacy." Weymouth translates it in his "Modern Speech New Testament": "Do not overindulge in wine—a thing in which excess is so easy." It is with some hesitation that I differ with all these. The word itself is "*asotia.*" If I may be pardoned for introducing a bit of Greek, the word *sozo* means "I save"; *sotēr* means "saviour"; *sotēria* means "salvation"; *soteos* means "the condition of safety." Now the Greek

language used to put the letter "a" before a word to mean what we mean when we put the prefix "un" before it. For example, "known, unknown"; "likely, unlikely"; "sound, unsound." Here, then, we have the word *a-sotia,* that is, "a condition of unsavedness," and that is practically destruction. "Be not drunken with wine wherein is self-destruction," expresses the idea quite accurately.

And this not only translates the Greek correctly, but it fits the case perfectly. All good in you will become less if you are drunken with wine. If you make any good resolutions they will be less frequent, and you will be less likely to keep them. If you have any high-toned principles they will be lowered. If you have any affections for good people they will cool. If you have any of the image of Christ in you it will be marred. If you pray some you will pray less. Companions will be of a worse grade, hopes less bright, conscience less virile; all that is in you of good will shrink and sink and rot. All will go on toward destruction—self-destruction. That is the picture. You have seen it when it was only sketched in outline; and you have seen the detail gradually filled in until it was all there—a full picture of self-destruction. How familiar and how sad it is! Body, mind, home, family, soul destroyed by wine. Surely "wine is a mocker and strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." All that picture was in Paul's mind. What he saw most vividly

was not the wine, nor the revelry, but the outcome of it—destruction, self-destruction. So he really meant, "Do not destroy yourselves, do not destroy yourselves!"

But now he suggests another picture. It is a company of people met together like the former, for pleasure. They talk quietly and helpfully about many things. They sing, but their songs are not like the others. If they do not sing, but are sweetly silent, there is melody in their hearts unto the Lord. And what is the outcome of this gathering? Men and women are not destroyed, but are perfected. Here again I ask your patience with a word of Greek. The word is *plē-ro-o*. It is used many times, and with two very distinct meanings. It has a use like our word "fill" a cup with water; or, if we may use the common term for drunkenness, a man is "full" of whisky. So far as the word alone is concerned, it might mean here that we are to be filled with the Holy Spirit in the same sense that men are filled with new wine. (Acts 2 : 13.) That is the common way of reading it. But Luke uses a different word when he says, Peter was filled with the Spirit. There is another use of Paul's word, more common, and better fitting this place. That is "fulfil." Thus fifty-four times it is translated "fulfil," and means that the things prophesied in the Old Testament are now completed. "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets" (Matt. 1 : 22; 2 : 15;

5 : 17, etc.). "That your joy may be full" (John 16 : 24). "Ye are complete in him" (Col. 2 : 10). "I have not found thy works perfect" (Rev. 3 : 2). If this be the idea, then we have here, "Be completed, be perfected by the Spirit." Instead of being destroyed, be perfected. The contrasted picture is one in which the contrast is not between wine and the Spirit (the order of the Greek words shows that), but between the results of wine and the results of the Spirit—between self-destruction and self-perfection. In this latter kind of filling men become more kind, more forgiving, more godly. They grow in grace and in likeness to Christ. They "perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord." As we say of the moon, it "fulled" last week, so we say of the Christian, he is being "fulled." He is rounding out; he will be full soon. Be "fulled" by the Spirit, would be accurate. While I know very well that this is not the interpretation given by many men of note and piety, I must differ with them. And I have the comfort of thinking that this clears up the passage, and makes it of value to us. It gives us help and hope. Here is a man beginning his Christian life. He is very immature in his knowledge of the Christian way. Its great motives are only just getting their hold upon him. His eyes are getting their focus so as to see things in the right perspective. He is a babe in Christ. But if he follows the lead of the Spirit he will become a full-grown, clear-visioned, sure-footed man. He

will be filled out, completed. Now he is a new moon, only a little rim of a Christian—only the barest outline of the full moon is visible. But he will become full, his character will be full-orbed. "In him ye are complete!" Paul has the same idea in other words when, in Philippians, he writes, "Work out your own salvation"; that is, finish up your salvation.

Such, then, seems to be the meaning of Paul's words. He does not exhort us to a passive waiting for the Spirit to fill us and carry us, as it were, unconscious and without making effort into the holy life, but calls on us to "be fulled." It is something for us to do. The connection shows that, for without finishing his sentence he goes on to say: "Speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs . . . giving thanks . . . subjecting yourselves," etc.

All these are the means to be used in "fulling" ourselves under the guidance of the Spirit. It is not mere emotionalism, but action.

When I was in school I used to go here and there preaching a Sunday or two in a place as supply. I heard many comments about other ministers. Some were called "smart," others were "old-fashioned preachers," others were "doctrinal." Of one they said, "He feeds us"; of another, "He is a 'spiritual preacher.'" I learned that when a man made people cry they called him "spiritual." Spirituality and emotionality were synonymous.

It is difficult to speak helpfully about the Spirit because of its very nature. The word is used freely, but I fear that often it has not much meaning. One year I had a class that contained several men who had been for a time in one of the "single-idea" schools. They were constantly injecting their notions about the Spirit into the discussions of the classroom, and we made little headway. Finally I said to them: "Now to-morrow we will give the day to a consideration of what we actually know about this matter. We will hear you tell the actual experiences you have had that you can positively say are due to the Holy Spirit. We want no theories and no guesswork." I waited for the next day with a sort of holy curiosity. When we got together and opened the class, we had a "silent meeting," like the Quakers. Not a man had anything to say. Their thought had made them careful. This was not a sign that they had no experiences, but when they looked carefully at the cases they were impressed that they had been parroting others' language and ideas rather than expressing their own ideas. But we are not to be disheartened by the subtileness of the subject. It is real, even if it be subtile.

We may say that the Holy Spirit as our guide does not give us explicit information. It does not reveal things without the use of other agencies. It works through our education, and it works in conjunction with the Scripture teaching. We learn from that

what sort of people we ought to be. As a painter by many strokes of his brush brings out the portrait, so the Scripture by precept and illustration, by law and by individual histories, gives us the spiritual portrait of the good man. The Spirit makes us feel that we ought to be like that portrait. I cannot explain the mystery. I simply know from Scripture and experience that men have within them after they yield to Jesus a certain something that responds to the teaching of Jesus as one harp responds to another.

Thus the New Testament becomes a guide. But I take it that in practical life the nearest approach to the voice of the Spirit will be found in our judgment of what the other fellow ought to do. The woman that wants to know the will of God for herself will be safe in doing what she thinks the pastor's wife ought to do. If the business man wants to know what is righteous, let him ask what he thinks his competitor ought to do, and he will get a pretty safe reply. This saloon man, does he know what is right? Well, I wish I could be as good a man as he says I should be. He can find a flaw in a Christian's life as quick as the scales will discover short weight. Let him be what he thinks I ought to be. Let him do what he would respect me for doing. This voter, let him vote as he thinks all Christians should vote, and he will be in the party of righteousness. Practically the Holy Spirit is the spirit of courageous loyalty to our very best

ideas of right. The man that has that courage is led by the Spirit, and will be "fulling" his life.

I have spoken of the view that makes the Spirit the same as the emotions. It is true that the emotions are moved by the Spirit; but the emotions are not to be our guide. They are the response the soul makes to the best ideals.

The Spirit has various works and ways. In our own hearts we find this mysterious agency leading and impelling us. But if we examine its influence we shall find that it mainly does its work by constraining us to follow what we think is the highest ideal. And that ideal has come to us through instruction. I do not attempt to explain the mystery of the Spirit's action, I only hope to point out some of its ways. It impresses upon us this: "You must do what you are sure is right." And when we ask, "But how am I to be sure?" we are led to the example of Jesus and the Scripture record of his teachings.

Paul goes on in his letter to specify what the right things are. He says in substance: "In perfecting yourselves you are to seek your success in this way: Speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Have melody in your hearts to God. Give thanks to God always. Submit yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ."

But Paul does not leave us to the uncertainties in application of his words. He goes right on without putting in a period between his sentences to describe

in full what kind of things the Spirit through instruction will prompt us to do. Recall how it reads. Counsel for all classes. Wives, husbands, children, parents, servants, masters, all get a word suited to them. And all this is what he means by being "fulled out" by the Spirit. If a church does these things it will be a joyous company—a pocket edition of the kingdom of God.

This is not mere word exercise. It is verified all the time by experience. A man once had turned to God from a drunkard's life. I found him weeping in his shop. "What is the matter, Tom," I said, "has the old habit got you down again?" "Oh, no," said he, "I could not help weeping to think that God would forgive such a bad man as I have been." A physician, a bitter opposer of the gospel of our Lord was converted in Cincinnati. He went to the church meeting on Sunday morning. Another doctor with whom he had been in enmity was there. This new-born Christian went up in front of the pulpit and said: "Brethren, I have been forgiven by the Lord for all my bitter hostility to him. There is a man here whom I have hated and injured. I ask him here and now to forgive me, and to come here and take my hand in token of our friendship in the future." Such things are the result of the Spirit "fulling out" a man's life. Did you ever go on your own initiative and ask a man to forgive you? If you did, was it not a happy hour for you? Were not your feet light, and was not

your heart glad? There was melody in your heart to God. When you have been patient with others, or obedient to your parents, or faithful to your employers, or kind to your help, has there not always come into your mind and heart a sweet consciousness that you were growing toward what you want to be? You have had under your breath a little whispered: "Lord, I thank thee for this; it is good to do thy way."

And when a church has been exceptionally obedient to these instructions, it has been fulfilling its mission, and has had songs of sweet satisfaction.

As the sun in spring makes old leaves drop off, and sets all the tree into motion toward fruitage, so the Spirit, when followed thus, sets all our souls into motion toward a good holy life. It warms us. It shames us. It helps us. It gives us tastes of goodness, and creates in us an appetite for it. May we all be thus filled out by its influence.

CHAPTER XI

THE CHRISTIAN WARFARE

"For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."—Eph. 6 : 12.

THERE is a certain kind of incongruity in Paul's words here. That the herald of a gospel of peace, which was ushered in by angelic songs, "Peace on earth, good will to men," should have so much to say about war and warfare seems at first a little unusual at least. He writes: "the weapons of our warfare," "the armor of righteousness," "God leadeth us in triumph," "a law in my members warring against the law of my spirit," "let us put on the armor of light," "having despoiled principalities and powers," "bringing into captivity every thought," "take the sword of the spirit," "put on the whole armor of God."

There is reason for this, however. Probably every day of his life he had seen Roman soldiers. The Roman Government was largely a military one. So it was natural for him to get his figures of speech from what was going on around him. And we

have the same habit, or perhaps the same necessity. Our hymns have a martial air about them:

Stand up, my soul, shake off thy fears,
And gird the gospel armor on.

Arm these thy soldiers, mighty Lord,
With shield of faith and Spirit's sword.

The Son of God goes forth to war,
A kingly crown to gain.

Am I a soldier of the cross,
A follower of the Lamb?

Sure I must fight if I would reign;
Increase my courage, Lord.

Onward, Christian soldiers,
Marching as to war.

My soul, be on thy guard,
Ten thousand foes arise.

Oh, watch and fight and pray,
The battle ne'er give o'er.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
Ye soldiers of the cross.

What a militant tone all this has! And there is a deep reason for this. The Christian life was battle, is a battle, and always will be in this world. Christian life is a strenuous affair. We make no mistake in thinking of it as a conflict. There is no

going to heaven on "flowery beds of ease." There is plenty of delight in it, but it is the delight of expected victory. But we may err in our idea of what the battle is for, and what is the kind of battle, and what is the enemy we have to contend with.

Our conflict is not for the church. There is great need to keep up the organization of the church. Unless we do keep up the services of the church the virility of our religious life gets less. We need the service to bind us together in the bonds of the kingdom. We need the regular ministry of instruction to keep us in mental trim for the necessary judgments of life. We need it for the opportunity it affords to reach others with the gospel. But, after all, the church is only an agency for winning the real battle.

Our conflict is not for some set of doctrines, or some system of theology. There has been much battling about such things, and it has its justification sometimes. Doctrines are necessary. No man has consistent Christian life without having a consistent set of doctrines that holds him to duty and hope as a rudder holds a ship up against the wind. We need "sound doctrine," the "faith once for all delivered to the saints." It is often necessary to oppose false doctrine, as Paul did in his letter to the Galatians. But these are not our main battle. They are only skirmishes for position.

And the fight is not for social conditions. No doubt Christians ought to combine to secure better social conditions than we have. There is a large

field for Christian sociology. We are very much interested in questions about the corporate activities of the "church." From a time when public men were disposed to sneer at the church we have passed into a state of opinion that seems to regard the church as chiefly a tool for some semipolitical service. It is thought that the church should solve the temperance question by legislation, and equalize the opportunities for labor, and regulate the hours of service, and fix a minimum wage, and wipe out the vice of cities, and practically take the government over into its hands and run it. And certainly the Christian people ought to be a controlling element in such matters. But our great fight, as considered in Paul's words, is not of that sort.

All these things demand what we have learned to call "team-work." That is, consolidation of effort, a unity of action. But "team-work" amounts to little if the individuals are not strong. The individual ultimately determines the team. And these Christian movements in society are, in the last analysis, dependent for their virility on the individual Christians. It is Paul's purpose here to encourage the individuals to cultivate and maintain a high grade of godly life, the correct habit of the inner life. That of which he wrote is a *struggle to maintain a* thoroughly good, pure, gentle, forgiving, hopeful, courageous, loyal, righteous life; to be a business man and not lose honesty in the sharp competition; to be a car-conductor and not forget to ring up the

fare; to be a companion meet for the husband, not simply a dependent on him; to be a mother to the children and not a mere chaperon; to be a young man active and joyous without becoming either a dude or a rowdy; to be a pastor, and not shrink up into an ornament for afternoon teas, nor become a high-grade graphophone that sings to a congregation whatever song some so-called scholar has sung into his plastic soul; to be a church-member and not a dead limb bearing no fruit and giving no help to the other limbs; to be all this, and to do all this, and having done all to stand—*that* is the task we have on hand. It is no holiday performance to live the Christian life well. The conflict goes on all the time in all places. We sometimes hear a man say, "All you have to do is believe, just believe." We sometimes sing, "Jesus died and paid it all." There is little but nonsense in that view of things. To be a Christian was an undertaking that made Jesus say, "Watch and pray"; and Paul said he had "fought the fight," and he exhorted others to "run with patience the race." It is not a joyless life. There are resting-places; and there is the joy of frequent victories, and of expected perfect victory. The fact that there is strenuous effort is not against the idea that it is joyous. The man that plays football is strenuous; he may become weary, but there is a joy in honest effort which makes the toil seem pleasure. God gave blessing, much more than a curse, when he gave man work.

THE CHARACTER OF THE WARFARE

That ye may "*stand against the wiles of the devil.*" We do not find our enemy out in the open with his flag flying and bidding us come and try our strength with him, as Goliath challenged David. Our battle may be won or lost when we least expect it. A man may think his weakness is speaking guile, and he means to be on his guard against it, but at the same time he may cheat a widow. One may say, "I strive to pay my debts promptly." And he does pay some of them. But he does not see that he owes a debt of kindness to his fellow men, and another of gratitude to God that he does not even acknowledge. Another man tries to govern his temper, and succeeds so well that he is not even angry at sin. When an adversary can turn attention to some side issue he is winning. One may spend so much time overcoming pride in a pretty bonnet that she forgets to struggle against a bad disposition. Some men fight against wastefulness who could not be wasteful if they tried. They are so born and bred to economy that they overlook the inherent stinginess that is rooted in them. A man may fight false doctrine so hard that he overlooks false living. Such people are sincere. They are brave, but they are deceived by the wiles of the enemy. They fight straw enemies. They waste their tears and prayers on the least of their faults. We need to be on guard against the

faults that skulk and hide in the bushes, and sneak around nights. Put not on a look of horror about things that are not half bad. We need to be sending out what we may call mental and moral pickets every little while to find the enemy, and make some strong reconnaissance to discover the strong positions, and the concentrated forces of him with whom we contend. Or to return to Scripture phrase, we may pray with the psalmist: "Search me, and try me, and see if there be any wicked way in me."

THE ENEMY

"*Not with flesh and blood, but with spiritual hosts of wickedness in high places.*" It is not necessary for us to know whether Paul really thought there are spiritual beings hostile to us, or whether he simply personified the tendencies to evil that were common in his day as they are in ours. The lesson is the same in either case. His purpose was to teach that the warfare concerning which he was speaking is not with men. He was in prison when he wrote this letter. He was often opposed by men, and wrote with great vehemence against the teachings of some men. But the great aim of his life was not to defeat men but to be found in Christ and to have the prize of the "upward calling of God." In that battle man had little part. Paul could be a kind man in his prison. The very wickedness of men might be the arena where he could win his victory.

He could, and did, love the Jews that hounded him to his death. John Bunyan was in prison when he wrote his immortal allegory, "Pilgrim's Progress," which has cheered and guided millions of men in their Christian life. His battle was in the jail, but not with the jailer.

What are some of the real hindrances that we meet in our endeavors to live godly lives? There are hindrances in the *moral atmosphere of our times.* Suppose, for example, that a man undertakes to keep the Sabbath in the old, and as he thinks the right, way—New England fashion. Saturday night all work is put away. Good books are read in the evening. Sunday morning,

> Peace is on the world abroad,
> 'Tis the holy peace of God.

The family go quietly to church and sit in the family pew. They all sing a hymn of praise; the minister reads a portion of Scripture and offers prayer; another hymn, and then the sermon about God and the Saviour (no politics or sociology); a closing hymn, and they go home talking over the sermon. The house is quiet. No visiting neighbors, no worldly books; but a sort of holy calm that rests both soul and body, and gives them a look of peace for the next day. How almost impossible that is now. Saturday night full of activity, and we are late to bed. Sunday morning nature demands her rest, and the best hours of the Sabbath

are spent in bed. At church all is more active than thoughtful; the Sunday-school is filled with stir. The streets are full of people; the cars are crowded with folks going on various errands. It is a day of wide-awakeness. A man has his battle inside his own heart. He asks: "Am I right in wanting a quiet Sabbath? Am I willing to break with custom and be called Puritanic, and in spite of remarks keep the day as I think it ought to be kept?" That is a case of battle. Or suppose a man says: "I will not be in such a rush. I will do business in a temperate way." Then he finds that business is a sort of procession; if a man does not keep up with it he is soon out of it. What shall he do? Will he choose less money and more life; or less life and more money?

Suppose he says, "We will live the simple life." He finds extravagance appeals to him on every side. From the toys for his children to the rental of his house and the silver plating on his auto, everything demands expense far above the necessities. If he tries to live for the next world, behold, this one clamors for his attention. Then there are plausible philosophies that men bring to us, the soothing platitudes about the goodness of God, and the helplessness of poor mankind, and the irony of fate, and the elective will of God. All these which would not only reduce the battle of life to the strenuosity of parlor croquet, but would cut the nerve of our best endeavors and condemn us to a hopeless life.

And there are *hindrances from the depths of our hearts.* Perhaps an ambition for success in business, or for reputation among men, or for social standing, becomes so strong that it pushes aside the rights of others, and the important duties to one's own soul and to God. Perhaps it is a sensitiveness to criticism that frets and scolds at remarks that have been made. It may be a love for personal comfort that neglects to consider others' comfort. With some it is a love of power and authority that leads one to be domineering, and to ride roughshod over those that will endure it. It may be a tendency to "go it alone" that leads him to neglect the sense of dependence on God.

When one has examined himself carefully he may find that the great enemy is concealed very deep in the heart, and he will be brought into sympathy with the psalmist when he prayed: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, renew a right spirit within me."

It needs the quiet hour to discover the location of our enemy. But when we have found it we are in shape to antagonize it.

OUR GREAT ALLY

For victory in this kind of struggle we are not left to our own strength nor even our own devices. The apostle pointed out that source of help. He says, "Put on the whole armor of God." That implies that God has a way of assisting us to victory. It is in religion that we have hope. The man that

attempts to win this kind of battle without calling upon his heavenly Father is depriving himself not only of the most available and suitable help, but ultimately of the victory itself. But with that help we may hope to "stand, and having done all to stand" against the wiles and the allurements of the evil. Therefore let us

Watch and fight and pray;
The battle ne'er give o'er;
Renew it boldly every day,
And help divine implore.

Ne'er think the victory won,
Nor lay our armor down;
Our arduous task will not be done
Till we obtain the crown.

It is neither a hopeless nor a joyless task. It would be a misrepresentation to say that the Christian life is a hard life. It is a strenuous one, a watchful one. But it is hard only when we try to live it in a half-hearted fashion or to live it in partnership with evil. It is hard for a woman to carry her child in arms when she is weak. But when she is strong she delights in it. It is hard to work when the work is too heavy; but work within our strength is the most delightful of experiences. The joy of doing things is the chiefest joy of the world. And the Christian life is the most joyful of all lives because, when in earnest about it, we have help to live it triumphantly.

CHAPTER XII

THE CHRISTIAN'S ARMOR

"Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; with all prayer and supplication, praying at all seasons in the Spirit and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all saints."—Eph. 6 : 14-18.

AFTER setting forth the fact that the Christian has a battle on hand, Paul goes on to point out the way of defense and victory. His method is remarkable. In our modern studies on health it has been found that the air is all the time more or less occupied with bacteria and germs of many kinds which, if they find suitable conditions of the human body, at once propagate and cause diseases hard to overcome. And the experts tell us that the surest and best way to avoid these diseases, and to cure them when they do attack us, is to build up the general health. One must breathe as he ought, and eat as he ought, and sleep his full time; he must have

exercise for his muscles, occupation for his mind, and good objects for his affections; body and soul must be active in worthy things, and then the germs are eliminated as fast as they get possession. We may become in a large measure immune to the diseases that are about us. We do not need to fight specific diseases with specific remedies, but we fight them all at once when we build up the general health.

Paul has the same idea in mind in this passage, but he expresses it in the language of the military man instead of the physician. He has spoken of the enemies we have to contend with, but in giving the figure of the armor he does not name weapons adapted against special kinds of sin, but describes what may be called a defensive armor against all sinful things and tendencies. To have this sort of armor is to have a sort of preparedness that does not so much win us the victories over sins as it keeps the sins from troubling us at all. It is the ounce of preventive instead of the pound of cure. It is having peace because we are prepared for war.

Now let us consider this armor. The whole passage is what we call an extended metaphor. Lest your rhetoric may not be fresh in mind, let me recall the nature of a metaphor. It is a figure of speech in which some object in one realm of existence is used to express an idea in another sphere. It grows out of poverty of language. We are compelled to borrow words to make our ideas plain. For

example, we say a man is a "pillar" in the church. (It does not say pillow.) What do we mean by that? Certainly not that he is made of wood or that he is a part of a church building. But we mean that there is a certain analogy between what the pillar does in the building and what he does in the church. It holds up some part of the building. And this man holds up—cares for—some part of the church work. Or if we say, "The Lord is my shepherd," we mean that there is a kind of likeness between what a shepherd does for his sheep and what the Lord does for us. This thing that is used in the figure is the "basis" of the metaphor. And it is necessary for us to be familiar with the "basis" if we get the meaning of the metaphor. I knew a man once who said he would not try to teach children in the city the Twenty-third Psalm because they did not know anything about sheep. His theory was right, but he underestimated the amount of information that comes to children through pictures. Or to illustrate further, take the saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven." Some men think that the analogy the Saviour has in mind there is the corruption of the leaven and the meal. They say leaven is a product of active corruption; put into the meal, it "spoils the meal." So, according to their reading, it is intended to teach us that evil gets into the church and spoils it. The world itself is getting worse and worse. Another class of men think that it is only the *method* of the leaven's work that is

in the Saviour's mind. A woman puts the yeast into the flour and sets it overnight in a warm place, and lo, while she sleeps it works without any noise, or fuss, or help, and in the morning the flour has all been leavened. So, they say, the great Teacher meant to teach that the kingdom of God in the world does much of its work in the quiet, unobtrusive, but effective, way that the leaven does its work. The disciples may not expect to see it all, or to know how it is done. It will work when they are asleep. But it will leaven society. So we see how important it is to get the right notion of the "basis" of the metaphor.

In this metaphor we have as the basis a Roman gladiator. It was the custom of those bloodthirsty Romans in Paul's time to sort their prisoners in war and train the best of them to fight one another for the amusement of the crowds as the Spanish now amuse themselves with bull-fights. They had a streak of bloodthirstiness about them that made them relish their meals, as some men do now, a little better if they had killed some animal before breakfast. These gladiators wore a short skirt like the Scottish Highlanders, held in place by a belt. They were protected with a shield, a breastplate, and a helmet. They were armed with a short sword. On their feet they wore a kind of shoe, such as the baseball men wear in our day, with spuds on the sole to keep them from slipping. They were alert, well trained, physically strong and well. It was

such a figure that the writer had in mind when he wrote this passage. And it is such a contestant that he gives as the ideal Christian man.

And now he seems to be seeing that gladiator getting ready for his contest. The armor is laid out for him, and he is to put it on preparatory to his contest for life. The writer here thinks of the armor as one that God has furnished for his own contestants. What shall we think and say about this suggestion? Is the armor of the Christian something that grows on him as the shell of the tortoise grows on the creature? Is it brought to us by some heavenly messenger? In what sense is it called the "armor of God"? It will not be amiss if we think of it in this way: divine wisdom tells us what sort of preparation we need to equip us, and divine grace helps us to "take up" this equipment. We are to think of ourselves daily as the gladiator thought of himself when he was going into the contest. He must be prepared. So, we are to make a daily preparation for our daily contest. We do not know just what special kind of attack the enemy will make, but we must be ready for any that he does make.

To put on this armor is to make certain definite and controlling resolutions, to adopt and cultivate certain great moral qualities such that inducement to wrong-doing will run off from us as water from a duck's back, without really affecting us. We may well stop and consider for a minute how great a

defense such resolutions are. A young woman who had been obliged to live where her surroundings were a constant influence to lead her into frivolities that would have ruined her Christian usefulness, but who nevertheless remained faithful to the higher ideals, was asked how she had been able to keep herself. She replied that her "won't" was bigger than her "want to." No better statement can be made concerning the power of resolutions. The man that resolves he "won't" is the man that has the first great advantage in the conflict. When the young Hebrew men were told to worship the golden image in Babylon, they said: "We have no need to answer thee in this matter"; but "be it known unto thee, O king," that we won't "serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (Dan. 3 : 18). The man that goes out now daily with such a resolution in his heart is already half victorious over the enemies of his soul.

I think that the reality that lies back of the metaphors of this armor are these *resolves* to be and to do,—"the wills" and the "won'ts" of life.

Resolve to *gird the loins with truth.* The expression "gird the loins" is full of suggestiveness to those who are familiar with Eastern customs, or with the habits of working men. It is written that when the prophet Elijah, after defeating the prophets of Baal at Carmel, was about to accompany Ahab to his home, he "girded up his loins and

ran before Ahab unto the entrance of Jezreel." That is, as a preparation for a strenuous task he tied his girdle tight about him. When Jehovah was about to address Job with some searching words, he said, "Gird up now thy loins like a man and answer me." Paul, when he wrote to the Philippians, said: "Gird up the loins of your minds, watch, and be sober." A friend of mine, who was caring for cattle in the far West, told me that sometimes the droves would take fright and run away into the deserts. Then the drovers must follow, and sometimes became separated from the camp and the food supply for a long time. I asked him what was to be done in such cases. He replied, "We take up a hitch in our belt."

Men having hard labor to perform, gird themselves with a tight belt. It has the effect of stiffening the muscles for a hard strain. So this resolve to be truthful gives a man a great support in time of trial. Truthfulness is more than refraining from telling falsehoods. It implies sincerity in speech and look and conduct. It says: "I will not pretend to an interest I do not feel; I will not pay compliments that are hollow; I will not make statements about my religious life that are extravagant; I will not pretend an affection that is not in my heart." Ministers have great need to gird themselves with such a girdle. They are expected to have an emotional life hard to be maintained. With some people emotion means spirituality, and if a

minister is not emotional he is accused of lacking the one element he ought to possess. But this assuming any attitude of life or speech or feeling that is not sincere has far-reaching consequences. It begins by causing men to mistrust one another; then they mistrust the Bible, then doubt themselves, and finally mistrust all good things. This girdle of sincerity will lead us to speak with exactness, to give only such compliments as are genuine, to seek to bring the feelings up to the language or keep the language down to the facts.

Again, *resolve to be righteous.* The breastplate covers the vital parts. So this resolve will keep the centers of life safe. It says: "I will not be unjust in my speech about others; in business I will not seek to get gain by any except straight business methods; I will not seek or accept credit for what I did not do. I will not try and be pushed forward beyond what I deserve; in my estimates of others I will not form unkind opinions without having all the facts; I will not hear a rumor and at once accept it without giving the man a chance to be heard in his own defense; I will not prejudge any man; it shall be the habit of my very life to be just in dealing, in speech, in thought, and in affection."

Again, *seek the comfort and assurance of being at peace with God.* The passage reads: "Having your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." What is the root of the suggestion in this

rather strange figure? As a boy I somewhere got the idea that it meant to go around, as it were, in "stocking feet" or woolen slippers, to be a quiet, inoffensive sort of man that never gets into a fuss with anybody. Later, I used to read that it meant to be prepared for missionary work. This was sustained by the statement that the soldier had his feet shod with strong boots to stand the marches of the campaign. But as I came to study the passage for myself I saw that the soldier the writer had in mind was not going on a march, neither is this exhortation directed to us as missionaries. The soldier here is the gladiator. It is the man going into the arena to fight for his life. He puts on the shoes with spuds so that he will not slip. He must be able to spring aside to avoid the thrusts of his antagonist. Or he may need to stand against the charge of his enemy. He must have a sure footing, for if he slips he is at once disadvantaged. What, then, is the analogy that comes over into our conflict? It is this: We must have a sure footing for our own courage. And nothing gives us that like a sense of being at peace with God. It is not here peace with men. Jesus said, "My peace give I unto you." And Paul wrote, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God" (Rom. 5 : 1). There is nothing that gives more courageous feeling toward our own inner temptations than to feel that we are at peace with God. "Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise," said Luther, when tempted

to deny the truth. It is a great uplifting inspiration to walk the streets in company with God. The world does not see the company, but a man may know he has it. Samuel Rutherford, writing from his prison where he was put for his faith, said: "Whoso can take up his cross handsomely will find it such a burden as sails are to ships and wings to a bird. My prison is a palace to me and Christ's banqueting-house." The old-fashioned question to inquirers after fellowship with the church was, "Have you made your peace with God?" Peace with God! "If God be for us, who can be against us?" When we have that we sing from the heart:

> Should earth against my soul engage,
> And fiery darts be hurled,
> Still I can smile at Satan's rage,
> And face a frowning world.

Therefore seek that peace each day as a preparation for the day's conflicts.

And again, *resolve to have faith*—"The shield of faith." Sometimes we hear it said, We cannot summon faith, it must come to us. But Jesus said, "Have faith in God." We are to remember that faith is not an involuntary attitude of soul. It comes to those that seek to have it. Professor James, the great psychologist, has a lecture, called "The Will to Believe," that it would be well for young men to read. He points out with great appropriateness that in cases of personal moment the man who

refuses to believe some great religious truths lest he should be duped, is really a man that fears to be called credulous more than he fears to lose the good of religion. Christian faith has its enemies. The apostle well calls them fiery darts. These are some of the darts: "There are so many indifferent Christians I do not believe it is worth while for me to try any longer." "There are so many things in God's providence that seem to me hard and inexplainable that I will not keep up the fight any longer." "The scholars are finding errors in the Bible." "There are so many denominations that I cannot tell which one is right, so I think I will wait until the matter is settled." "Taking the world as it is, I do not think it practicable to live the Christian life consistently, and I will not go any farther." "The truth is, we are all the creatures of circumstance and environment; we are what we are by a subtle law of necessity; I may as well drift with the current, and not fight it any more; what the Almighty intends me to be I shall become at last." All these and many more from the same source come flying toward us. Our reasonable duty is to *resolve* that we *will believe in God* and *in Jesus,* and in the *underlying trustworthiness* of the *Bible,* and in the *salvability of man,* and in our *own possibility of victory.* For one to fall into a frame of mind that doubts everything is to rob oneself of all victory. I am not pleading for a credulous mind, but for a mind with a virile faith. I am pleading

for the mind of the disciples when they said, "Lord, increase our faith," and the mind of the man who said, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." We may fairly assume after the beginnings of our Christian life that the burden of proof against the reality of it rests upon those that dispute it. And before we give in to the doubts that assail us, let the enemy prove his case by an experience as substantial as the experience we have had of its truth. If some siren of doubt whispers:

> The day is quenched, the sun is fled,
> God has forgotten the world;
> The moon is gone, the stars are dead,
> God has forgotten the world.
>
> There is no God, there is no good,
> And faith is a heartless cheat
> That bares the back for the devil's rod
> And scatters thorns for the feet.

Then let the grace of God reply:

> The day will return with a fresher boon,
> God will remember the world;
> Night will come with a newer moon,
> God will remember the world.

Let the psalmist lead our song:

> Jehovah is my light and my salvation;
> Whom shall I fear?
> Jehovah is the strength of my life;
> Of whom shall I be afraid?
> . . . In the day of trouble he will keep me
> secretly in his pavilion. —Psalm 27.

"*And take the helmet of salvation.*" Evidently the writer had some definite element of preparation for the daily conflict which was suggested by the helmet. It is a subtle idea. But if we remember that the breastplate suggested justness of heart and purpose, we may reasonably think that what he now has in mind as he writes "helmet" has to do with the intellect. It is some sort of defense against errors of the head that work our damage in Christian life. These are numerous enough to keep us alert. Errors that give us wrong conceptions of life and duty. What, then, is his idea of "salvation"? It meant to the Christians of that day to be forgiven their sins (Eph. 1 : 7) and taken into the company of those that were to be the special care of Jesus until he should come (John 6 : 37-40) and receive them into an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and reserved in heaven for them. (1 Peter 1 : 4, 5.) It meant that in their cases "all things work together for good" (Rom. 8 : 28). That they were the very treasure of God. (Eph. 1 : 10.) To "take the helmet" is then to consider this inheritance, and to keep in mind the fact that such a hope is ours.

If a man goes out with that in mind, what a stimulus it is to all his mental activities! How often have we seen men of very limited education and mediocre mental activities awakened to thorough mental activity. They became studious and efficient. They felt that life was a noble thing.

They estimated themselves as beings of importance who had no right to live thoughtlessly. They saw that God had estimated them at great worth, that Christ had died for them. It is said that when at one time John Adams was about to leave home on public business, his wife said to him, "Now, John, don't shilly-shally." She felt that he was carrying responsibility that needed his best thought. So, if a man feels himself to be the object of God's thought, he will not want to "shilly-shally."

It also gives a man a clear idea of his own inherent weakness when he thinks that his salvation comes not by his own excellence, but that only by the grace of God is he kept from pride of opinion and from self-righteousness which would interfere with the humility befitting his place.

And again, a thoughtful consideration of his "salvation" will keep him from those errors of philosophy that have in every age been the temptation of thinking men. He sees that the scheme of life is too great for man to have wrought out or fully to understand. He must trust and wait.

And *take "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."* We are to go out daily with the fresh memory of God's word to all believers. It may be a word of caution or a word of command. It is always a word of encouragement; and, when it is needed, a word of comfort. We may not say that the writer had in mind our Bible, which we call the

"word of God," for it had not then all been written. The New Testament—a part of it—he was then writing. But the Christians of that day had the substance of the word orally delivered to them; and they had the Old Testament, which contained the words of promise and direction. Unless one has given thought to it, he will be surprised to find what a defense against many temptations is to be found by taking a little thought and time every morning to read and think of some part of the written word. (See 2 Tim. 3 : 15-17.) It will stay in the mind like the perfume of flowers and come back in many an hour of trial. The psalmist long ago wrote: "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word" (Ps. 119 : 9). And Paul wrote, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Col. 3 : 16). It was by the written word that Jesus defeated the tempter on the mount of his trial. (Matt. 4 : 4, 7, 10.) It is, indeed, a sword of good metal and fine temper.

With this word in the heart and these resolutions fixed in the will a man stands forth every morning with a fair prospect that he will be a victorious Christian this day; he will be a good soldier of Christ, and he will stand in the conflicts with a good degree of firmness. At first reading it would seem as if the writer had stated his case fully, and the next part of the passage appears to be a sort of anticlimax. But a further comparison of it with

the facts of life shows that the climax of wisdom for us is not yet reached. He goes on to say: "*Praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all saints.*" Which we may translate into our way of saying things by this: "Watch for opportunity to lift up prayers for other Christians that are engaged in conflict similar to yours." Observation shows us that a very efficient help toward living the Christian life ourselves is an active, sympathetic interest in the Christian welfare of others. If a man is praying for his children or his neighbor, he will find that it is made much easier for him to keep straight himself. A woman once said to me: "Pastor, you told us we ought to seek to have our servants converted to Christ, and I have been trying to lead my servant girl to him, but I find it is pretty hard on me. I felt like scolding her several times, but I could not, for if I did, I should lose my influence for her conversion." That expresses the facts in all our relations. To have a great desire for others to be truly Christlike is an unfailing fountain of help for ourselves. It gives nerve and persistence and virility to our use of the armor.

But this does not exhaust the counsel given us. He adds: "*And for me, that utterance may be given unto me in opening my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains.*"

That is, the Christian is to have an interest in the great unconverted world as the final element of his own equipment for his daily struggle to be a consistent Christian. This is a very subtile thought. Interest in the whole world the climax of strength for one's own personal godliness! Interest in foreign missions a crowning element in the equipment for one's own full Christian life! And yet experience shows that it is true. One who has a large aim that possesses his thoughts overlooks a thousand little things that might otherwise irritate and disturb him. The man that is bent on building a new house feels no sense of deprivation at the economies he practises for the sake of it. The man that seeks to bring his neighbor to Christ does not notice the slights that he may at times meet in doing so. So the man that is interested in the kingdom at large is neither discouraged, nor too self-satisfied, at the smaller concerns of his own surroundings.

Peter has the same thought when he writes: "Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness." But he does not stop with this kindness to the brethren; he goes one round of the ladder beyond, "and to brotherly kindness love." And the love he speaks of is the kind that Jesus had—unlimited by race or condition—love for mankind.

And now we have surveyed some of the great teachings of this "prisoner of Jesus"—this "am-

bassador in chains." There is not a teaching that has gone out of fashion, none that has been superseded since Paul's times. They are to-day the fundamentals of all Christian life. May the blessing of God rest upon this endeavor to transpose the teachings, and upon the hearts of those who have read them, that the kindly and loving purposes of him who died for us may be attained.